

THE PROPER APPLICATION OF EXPOSITIONAL SERMONS PREACHED AT
SECOND CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA,
ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN OF
MULTIPLE GENERATIONS, WILL LEAD TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND
CHANGED LIVES

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

I believe that expository preaching will change the lives of women when properly applied. It is my belief that spiritual growth will result in changed lives if there is proper application of the Word of God, in spite of circumstance or challenges. I want to examine my hypotheses regarding the relationship between expository preaching and spiritual growth among African American women of multiple generations.

As a means of determining how expository preaching, when appropriately applied, can lead to spiritual growth among multigenerational African American women, I used a variety of methods. I administered empirical studies, developed teaching curriculums, preached sermons, and received both written and verbal feedback from the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church between the ages of 26 and 80 (who are a part of the Boomers, Busters, and Generation X generations). The core values, and listening characteristics of men and women were examined to demonstrate the differences in information processing.

In conclusion, expository preaching, when properly applied, leads to spiritual growth of women of multiple generations in spite of their challenges for the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte North Carolina. The empirical data overwhelmingly indicated the value of expository preaching in the lives of women of multiple generations at Second Calvary Baptist Church. Through expository preaching, the truth of God's Word is made known. Many women have made it known verbally, in written form, and through their lifestyles that expository preaching has impacted their lives.

CHAPTER 1

EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING APPLIED EFFECTS CHANGE IN WOMEN

Introduction

It is the charge of the preacher to proclaim the Word of God with accuracy and authority. Every Sunday church doors open and people enter expecting to hear a Word from God. Many of the people who enter are encumbered with concerns and cares from their home environment, work environment, careers, and or relationships. There are times when these concerns and cares are made known, and there are other times when they are not. In either case, the preacher can never assume that that these concerns do not exist, and he or she must be aware of it. It must be on the mind of the preacher to deliver a Word that speaks to the challenges that are present in the lives of the members of the congregation. Through expositional preaching, these challenges within our society, can be addressed, and when applied appropriately, can lead to spiritual growth. At its core, Haddon Robinson's definition of expository preaching is:

the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experiences of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.¹

Based upon this definition, it is the expositional preaching that allows the preacher, as well as the listener, to apply the Word of God in its context, and use it as a guide to improve thoughts, actions, and emotions. Research has indicated that "a majority of those attending church weekly in America are women (53 percent). Similarly, women make up the majority of those involved in small-group prayer meetings and Bible studies (60 percent), adult Sunday school programs (59 percent), and church volunteer efforts (57

¹ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1994), 20.

percent)”.² However, many of the sermons that are preached, do not specifically address the challenges that women face. Why then, do women make up the majority of the congregations in spite of this void? Sussman reported that eighty three percent of adults in this country are Christians, with most of them attending a religious service at least once a week. Sussman also reports that forty six percent of Protestants attend church at least weekly, and Baptist attendance is peaking at fifty two percent. The same study indicates that slightly over two-thirds of Baptists are in the South, far more than elsewhere (the Midwest is next, at just 17 percent). That’s one reason church attendance in the South is higher than elsewhere.³

Problem

These data raise some questions that must be asked. Why do women continue to attend church in spite of the many life-challenges that they face? Are there general challenges that are being addressed? How does the preacher’s awareness of these challenges aid in the sermonic impact? Dr. Donald Sunukjian suggests that the preacher identify the challenges and needs of the women are within his or her congregations, and then address those needs through expositional preaching. Since the above statistics show that the majority of church attendees are women, how is expository preaching meeting their needs? As a means of finding an answer to this question, I have decided to use my ministry setting, and the women within the congregation as a case study to identify the impact of expository preaching in their lives. This is the question that I must ask so that I

² Dave Bohon, “More Americans Are Going to Church,” <http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/family/4033-more-americans-are-going-to-church> (accessed July 14, 2010).

³ Dalia Sussman, “Who Goes to Church,” ABC News, (February 28, 2002), <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html> (accessed July 6, 2010).

may address the needs of the women at Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. As preachers, we must recognize the opportunity to affect change in the lives of the hearers by administering the Word of God in a manner that not only addresses a general need, but one that will address the specific needs of individuals. Within the ministry context of Second Calvary Baptist Church, I must recognize the needs of African American women within my congregation. Some of the known challenges that women deal with are: sexual abuse, verbal abuse, depression, low self-esteem, health concerns, and career pressures just to name a few.

Research Question

In the context of this thesis, I want to know how the proper application of expositional sermons preached at Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina addressing the challenges and needs of women, will thereby lead to spiritual growth and changed lives in African American women of multiple generations. The specific generations that will be studied are: the Baby Boomers, the Busters, and what we will currently call Generation X for this current generation.

Purpose

I believe that expository preaching will change the lives of women when properly applied. It is my belief that spiritual growth will result in changed lives if there is proper application of the Word of God. I believe that this growth will take place in spite of circumstance or challenges. I want to examine my hypotheses regarding the relationship between expository preaching and spiritual growth among African American women of multiple generations. In *The Pastor's Guide to Effective Preaching*, Dr. Billy Graham

list five assumptions that he believes exist within every person, regardless of their ethnicity, geographical setting, or stage in life. These five assumptions are:

- 1) Life's needs are not totally met by social improvement or material affluence
- 2) There is an essential emptiness in every life without Christ
- 3) There is a loneliness that exist within the hearers
- 4) There is a sense of guilt within the people we are speaking to
- 5) There is a universal fear of death.⁴

These are the five that have been identified by Dr. Graham, but they are by no means all inclusive. However, what is indicated by the assumptions listed above is that expository preaching has the ability to address needs and change lives.

Within the context of the ministry at Second Calvary Baptist Church, some of the circumstances that our women face are: rearing children as a single parents, domestic violence, recovering from drug addictions, sexual abuse, social depravity, career challenges, etc.⁵ Bachman's research goes on to reveal that "domestic violence is often overlooked as "a lovers' quarrel" or a "private family matter," but it is an epidemic that affects women of every class, race, sexual orientation and religion. Ninety to ninety-five percent of domestic violence victims are women, and many of these women are active members in their local churches."⁶ In the midst of these challenges, the women of our congregation are continuing to grow spiritually. Not only are the numbers increasing, but life styles, decisions, and actions are changing in ways that bring honor to God.

The Importance of the Study

The congregation of Second Calvary Baptist Church is experiencing a variety of shifts. Five years ago the total membership of the church consisted of 182 members on

⁴ Billy Graham, *The Pastor's Guide to Effective Preaching*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2003), 12.

⁵ Ronet Bachman, "Violence Against Women: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report," www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/199579.pdf (accessed April 21, 2009).

⁶ Bachman, "Violence Against Women: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report", 2.

role, with 145 of them being considered as active members. In addition, it predominantly consisted of members who were 60 years of age and older. Today, (five years later) the number of members on role has increased to 621 with 542 of them considered as active. With this growth, there is now a healthy representation of all ages. In particular, there has been a significant amount of growth of members between the ages of 26 and 60. The growth that has taken place has not been due to former members returning to the church, but it has been an influx of people who are either new to the city, or to Christianity.

The demographic makeup of our congregation yields the following information. We currently have 137 men, 378 women, and 106 children and youth on our church role giving a total of 621 members. Of that number, 74 members are ages 61 and over, 234 are between the ages of 41 to 60, 159 are between the ages 26 to 40, 48 are between ages 18 to 25, and 106 are ages 17 and under. Based on this information, our total adult membership is 515 with 378 of them being women. Therefore, the adult women in our congregation more than double the number of men – they comprise 73.3% of our congregation. I knew that we had more women, (which is typical of most church settings), but I did not realize that the ratio was almost three fourths of the congregation. As a result, one of the obvious questions for me as pastor is what is being said or done in the preaching that connects with women? And a subsequent question for me was what could I do through my preaching to better connect with them? Although, I have addressed some women's issues in my past sermons, there has not been an intentional effort to solely focus on women's needs with my preaching. Most of my preaching focuses on issues that are applicable to both male and female. I now want to know what

needs there are that I still have not focused on that may strengthen the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church.

Overview

I have decided to focus on the women of my congregation who are between the ages of 26 and older to evaluate how expository sermons are meeting their needs thereby becoming a catalyst for spiritual growth, and how I may even more effectively reach them through my preaching. According to the data received, of the 378 women who are on our church roll, 277 of them are between the ages of 26 to 80, which comprise 73.3% of our female members, and 44.6% of our total adult membership. Not only does the survey indicate their presence, but the survey also indicates their financial support, both of which are very important in ministry.

As a means of determining how expository preaching, when appropriately applied, can lead to spiritual growth among multigenerational African American women, I will use a variety of methods. I will administer three surveys and a sermon evaluation form to the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church between the ages of 26 and 80 (who are a part of the Boomers, Busters, and Generation X generations) to determine the value of expository preaching to them. The initial survey (Survey A) will ask them to anonymously list the challenges they face in everyday life. Included on that survey, they will be asked a series of questions encouraging them to evaluate their own attitudes, thoughts, and emotions toward their life challenges, and how expository preaching plays a role in there and their spiritual growth. Once the surveys are collected, they will be charted and used as instruments in determining some of the challenges of women, and the affects of expository preaching in their lives. These instruments will also provide insight

on what challenges need to be addressed through expositional preaching at Second Calvary Baptist Church. A curriculum will be developed and taught using the information from the surveys, and information regarding expository preaching approximately a month later in a Women's Seminar at Second Calvary Baptist Church to evaluate the value of expository preaching and its ability to address their life challenges.

A second survey (Survey B) will be administered at the beginning of the Women's Seminar, with a special emphasis on their challenges and their method of overcoming those challenges. At the conclusion of the Seminar, a final survey (survey C) will be administered to assess the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church's views on preaching and whether or not it is valuable to them. In addition, a sermon will be preached the day after the Women's Seminar intentionally addressing one of the challenges indicated on survey A. Following the sermon, a sermon evaluation form will be distributed to the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church ages twenty six through eighty to determine if the sermon was applicable, understandable, and useful for their spiritual development and growth. I wanted to know in what ways the application of expositional sermons would aid in their spiritual growth. In addition to surveys, I will describe the core values of the Boomers, the Busters, and Generation X obtained from research data, and attempt to address some of those values through expositional preaching.

In chapter two, I will seek to establish a theological and biblical framework, through an exegetical study of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15, to demonstrate God's view of women and their value to Him. This will serve as a basis for demonstrating the liberating power in God's Word and its ability to address all challenges. Chapter three will address the

writings of others on some of the known challenges that women deal with such as: sexual abuse, verbal abuse, depression, low self-esteem, health concerns, and career pressures. This chapter will also note the differences in learning styles of women, the core values of multiple generations, and their view of God. Chapter four will present the teaching curriculum developed based on the surveys and other data to evaluate the value of expository preaching in the lives of women of multiple generations, at Second Calvary Baptist Church, and its ability affect spiritual growth in spite of life's challenges. Chapter five will contain an analysis of the empirical studies administered throughout this process, along with additional information used in evaluating the effectiveness of expository preaching in the lives of women of multiple generations at Second Calvary Baptist Church.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN AND THE CHALLENGE OF SCRIPTURE

The focus of this chapter is to establish a biblical framework to examine the thesis that the application of expository sermons focusing on the challenges facing women of multiple generations will lead to spiritual growth. As a means of determining what the many challenges facing women were, I decided to construct and distribute an informational survey whereby women were encouraged to list the challenges they encounter in life. In addition to the challenges, it was also imperative that their own biblical understanding be determined by gaining their perspective on passages of Scripture that have been controversial with regards to the role of women. The importance of describing their biblical understanding should play a key role in how the challenges they encounter are handled.

The informational survey (survey A) that was administered to many of the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, indicated that certain Bible passages were viewed as chauvinistic and demeaning to women, thereby creating a hindrance to their understanding of the role of women according to 2 Timothy 3:16. Scripture presents an idea that spiritual growth occurs when the needs of an individual are met through the Word of God. A large component in measuring spiritual growth involves lifestyles in the midst of life's challenges. John A. Huffman Jr. says, "in the proclamation of the preached word, biblical themes derive a contemporary authenticity".¹ He goes on to say, that preaching "brings together all of these other dimensions in a way that both builds up individual believers and strengthens the corporate community of

¹ John A. Huffman Jr. et al., eds., *The Pastor's Guide to Effective Preaching* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2003), 36.

faith”.² In like manner, this belief is shared as it pertains to women, even in the face of their many challenges in life. When focusing on those matters that pertain to women through expositional preaching, it is important to approach it from an accurate interpretation of Scripture, even if that interpretation is not the traditional one held of Scripture. Many passages pertaining to women, their worth, value, role in society, and in the church have historically been misinterpreted as well as misapplied. While there are a variety of passages that can be examined when studying the role of women in the Bible, the main passage that I will examine, is the one that has, over time, been either highly controversial, or grossly misinterpreted.

There are several Bible passages that cause levels of discomfort among many women readers. The most prominent among them are 1 Timothy 2:11-13 (“I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent”); 1 Corinthians 11: 4-16 (“women should cover their heads”); and 1 Corinthians 14: 34-36 (“women should be silent in the churches... for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church”). In a recent survey given to the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte North Carolina, a list of these Bible passages were given to women to read and then rank them according to the level of discomfort or confusion. First Timothy 2:9-15 was noted as the passage that created the most confusion within our congregation. Therefore, this passage will serve as the basis for my exegetical analysis for interpreting 1 Timothy 2:9-15, and using that information as a catalyst for the empowerment of women rather than the oppression of them. The misinterpretation of this passage has been one of the major obstacles that has caused many women to shy away from the church, or to reject some of the teachings in the Bible all together. Other passages that I will examine, to understand

² Huffman, *The Pastor's Guide to Effective Preaching*, 36.

how women are depicted in Scripture are: Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:21-22, Genesis 3:16-19, 1 Corinthians 11: 4-16, 1 Corinthians 14: 34-36 and Galatians 3:26-28.

The roles of women, and more importantly, an accurate picture of the way women are presented in the Bible are essential. Throughout the years,

“the traditional interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 has held that these verses forbade women to teach or make decision, which creates a cloud when attempting to understand the Bible’s teachings. The fact is that women did indeed teach men, that women served as leaders, and that in doing so, they enjoyed God’s blessings and won the praise of other believers. Priscilla instructed the learned Appollos, Lois and Eunice taught Timothy, and Phoebe is named as an overseer and a deacon in the church at Cenchrea.”³

I believe when the preacher has a proper understanding of the Bible and the above-mentioned passages, the preaching and teaching will reflect it, thereby aiding women in their spiritual growth, thereby effecting life decisions. This type of growth will take place regardless of the challenges women face in life, because they understand that they are just as valuable in the plan of God as their male counter-parts.

In this section, I will primarily focus on the passage that created the highest degree of challenge for the women within the congregation. I will look at how women are viewed in Scripture. To do this, I will first attempt to establish an accurate understanding and thereby dispel the misconceptions that many women have regarding 1 Timothy 2:9-15, while addressing 1 Corinthians 11:4-16 and 1 Corinthians 14: 34-36. Secondly, I will examine Galatians 3 to address the value of women according to Scripture. Thirdly, the actions of Jesus and Paul toward women will also be addressed. As the statistics indicate, the majority of church attendees are women, and the factors that contribute to that attendance are note worthy. One of the essential factors may be

³ Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroger. *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence* (Miami: Baker Books, 1998), 17.

because of expositional preaching.⁴

The first epistle written to Timothy was an effort to provide encouragement and correction to the church at Ephesus. More commonly known as one of the “Pastorals”, it was largely comprised of issues concerning the Christian church. Although there were questions regarding authorship that surfaced regarding this epistle in an attempt to deemphasize its authority, it is commonly believed to be authored by Paul. However, there are some scholars who have raised the following issues that create doubt of Pauline authorship. First, the vocabulary of the Pastoral epistles does not appear in other known writings of Paul (1 Tim 1:12, 2:2, 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22). Secondly, the Pastorals describe Paul's visits to Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3), to Miletus (2 Tim 4:20), to Troas (2 Tim 4:13), and other missions, which do not coincide with Paul's journeys listed in the book of Acts.⁵ Early philosophers such as Basilides, Tatian, and Marcion argued against Pauline authorship, and rejected his Epistles. Tatian accepted Titus, but rejected the other Epistles. Other research notes that Norman Perrin argued that Paul's travels to Crete (Titus 1:5-6), again to Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3), Nicopolis (Titus 3:12), and Troas (2 Tim 1:15, 4:13) cannot be fit into any reconstruction of Paul's life or works as determined from the other epistles or from Acts”.⁶ Some of these scholars also believe that the organization of church worship depicted in 1 Timothy did not come into existence until after Paul's death, thereby indicating that the letter could not have been written by him.⁷ It is possible that the visit to Ephesus took place after Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment in Acts. Lastly, in response to development of the church, history points

⁴ Bohon, “More Americans Are Going to Church”.

⁵ C.A. Trentham, *Studies in Timothy* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1959), 1.

⁶ John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2000), 10.

⁷ Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 13.

out that its development was rapid and such organization is not inconceivable; meaning that the organizational structure could have been present during Paul's lifetime.⁸ Despite these ideologies, there is no sound evidence to prove that Paul did not write these epistles; therefore, Paul will be viewed as author.

Authorship is extremely important because much of the teachings found in these epistles are accepted based on Paul's apostolic authority. Based on the empirical studies administered to the women of our congregation, many of the women at Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte North Carolina have silently wrestled with 1 Timothy 2:9-15. These empirical studies indicate that they wrestled primarily because, even though 1 Timothy 2:9-15 is believed to be the inspired word of God, written by Paul (an apostle of Jesus Christ), it appears to promote the oppression of women. Therefore for some of our women within Second Calvary, there is an internal conflict with their intended role and function according to God. And for other women within our congregation, it appears to contradict the other writings of Paul where he validates and encourages women. Expository preaching can create spiritual growth through the understanding that God values women. Therefore, the historical interpretation of First Timothy 2: 9-15 has created sense of oppression and male domination, thereby creating a hindrance for some women, and a void in the church's impact potential. I believe if there is a correct understanding of this passage, it can actually be empowering not only to women, but also to all who understand and apply it. If women can know that they are valued by God, it is the awareness of that truth that promotes spiritual growth. We must first address the reason for the Epistle.

Believed to have been written between 63 and 64 A.D., 1 Timothy was sent to

⁸ Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 14.

address specific heresies that occurred during public worship in Ephesus based on the cultural practices of some of the new converts.

“Our conception of First Timothy is usually based upon the presupposition that it was written as a manual on ecclesiastical government for a church not much different from our own. The reality may come as a distinct surprise. The letter is addressed to a church in turmoil, threatened by heresy in its midst and fraught with bitter disputes over matters of faith and practices. That church was in dire need of practical and spiritual direction”.⁹

In correcting the erroneous assumption of ecclesiastical governance, the recipients of this letter can be viewed as two-fold: first, Timothy and secondly, the Church at Ephesus. For Timothy, it provided encouragement to persevere despite persecution he and the church were facing. For the Ephesian church, it provided directives that attempted to correct distractions during public worship and create an atmosphere worthy of God. The make-up of the congregation was diverse which presented another challenge for Timothy. It consisted of Anatolians, Greeks, Jews, Romans, and others, all of which brought their cultural practices with them.¹⁰ Since Ephesus was a major trade center between Italy and the East, the population constantly increased. With this influx of people, many new religions and practices developed. There were some monotheistic Jews as well as polytheistic Jews. Likewise, there was the practice of idolatry, with temples erected that were dedicated to Caesar as well as Artemis. “The people called Caesar ‘god’ and honored him as a god during his lifetime. A statue was dedicated to him in the temple of Quirinus in 45 BC with the words “To the invincible god”. Before his death, he had his own temple under the name Jupiter Julius. This was the first step in establishing the cult,

⁹ Kroeger and Kroeger. *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 43.

¹⁰ Sharon Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 122.

by honoring a living hero according to early Greek culture. The second step in the cult of Caesar was taken with his official apotheosis after his death. Apotheosis is the elevation or exaltation of a person to the rank of a god, therefore, as a dead hero he was transferred to the number of the gods. In addition to the senate and people declaring him a god and during the celebration in honor of the divus Julius, the appearance of a comet was taken as proof that his soul had been received into the number of the immortals.¹¹

The Artemis cult proved to be an additional obstacle because they were a female-dominated cult that viewed men as their subjects, and many of them brought these practices and principles into the church at Ephesus. Along with the variety of people that made up the congregation within the Church, the false doctrines and practices of the cultic groups and religions which they came from also entered the church with them. Gnosticism was one of the major religions that stood as an opponent to Christian teaching.

Gnosticism has been called a religion of rebellion. Its mythology constitutes an 'upside-downing' of the Bible as we know it. The writer of First Timothy called for readers to beware of 'non-sense' which sets itself against God, as well as of 'oppositions of so-called knowledge (gnosis)' (1 Tim 6:20)"...Gnostics claimed that they had special secret knowledge.¹²

As a result, Paul wrote Timothy to address these issues. One of the issues addressed dealt with how Timothy should handle public worship, and specifically the cultic women who were in attendance. Over time, this passage has been taken out of context, thereby causing discomfort and confusion within women who desperately seek the will of God for their lives, and involvement in the church and Kingdom work. The information that

¹¹ *Church History Study Helps: Emperor Worship*, <http://www.theologywebsite.com/history/rulercult.shtml> (accessed August 10, 2010).

¹² Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 61.

follows is an attempt to view this passage within the framework that it was intended, and convey that message to all who study it. For the purpose of this writing, we will take a detailed look at verses 11 through 15, because they are the controversial verses that have been used to limit women spiritually and emotionally in areas of ministry, worship, career, and even family.

In chapter two beginning at verse one, the church was instructed to make “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men”. It could better be translated that Paul wanted Timothy to pray for everyone, including those who were in authority in an attempt to obtain peace in the midst of persecution and chaos. Timothy was told to be an example to the church and put into practice what he had been preaching. In verse seven, Paul qualified himself through his apostolic office, and explained how he was able to make such authoritative statements and requests to the church at Ephesus. Paul moved from his general address to men and women, and turned his focused particularly toward public worship with the church in Ephesus, and the decent manner in which it was to be carried out. Beginning at verse 8, the use of “I will” best translates into: “I desire” and “I want” and is a request by Paul establishing guidelines based on his authority figure as an apostle of Jesus Christ.¹³ Charles Trentham records: “The word translated ‘I will’ or ‘I desire’ carries a twofold emphasis. It indicates the writer’s authority, and it magnifies the need for that which is about to be written.”¹⁴ The word that followed Paul’s desire was “therefore” (not found in the NIV perhaps because it is assumed to be understood). “Therefore” should serve as a clue to the scripture reader that he or she must find out what important information, events, or statements were listed

¹³ Trentham, *Studies in Timothy*, 32.

¹⁴ Trentham, *Studies in Timothy*, 33.

prior to the “therefore”. It is a conjunction that joined together the preceding with the following; and it signifies the basis for upcoming information and content. In a biblical perspective, it implied that important information had already been listed that would be valuable in the interpretation of Scripture, and minimize errant conclusions.

The request that follows “that men pray everywhere” could take two different routes in the reader's interpretation. If it were viewed according to our present day literal translation, it would mean “males”, thereby being exclusive. If it is viewed from its Greek context, it could suggest a request for universal prayer to be performed by both men and women everywhere. Up to this point in the epistle, the use of “men” has not referred to males only, but it had a general use, thereby it would not be a stretch for it to also be inclusive of women. In the preceding verses “men” in the Greek translation denoted both men and women (as seen in 1 Tim 2:1, 4, and 5). Women did participate in public prayer as noted in I Cor 11:5, and Paul himself wrote: There is one mediator between God and men (*anth'-ro-pos*), which includes both male and female. This distinction is important because it demonstrates the inclusive manner in which Paul approached ministry. If Paul’s inclusiveness of women in ministry in the early church is made known, it indicates their value to Paul, and more importantly to God. Women can draw strength from knowing the Word of God does not devalue them, and neither should society.

After briefly speaking to male and female about the necessity for them to pray with a proper attitude and spirit in verse 8, Paul redirects his attention to public worship, and starts by specifically addressing women. At first glance, verses 9-15 appears to indicate that Paul establishes a universal role for women that limits their degree of

participation in worship and service to God. Sharon Gritz believes however, verses 9-15 do not exclude women or limit their role, but rather explains how they are to worship and the inner spirit by which to do so.¹⁵ If it is established through expositional teaching and preaching that the roles of women were never limited, then congregations would consist of more empowered men and women.

There are many passages in both the Old and New Testament that clearly point out the role of women and their significant contributions in carrying out the divine plan of God. Karen Kroeger wrote:

“At a number of crucial points in the history of God’s people, a succession of wise women appears to cope with problems which the men have been unable to resolve (1 Sam 25:3-35; 2 Sam 14:2-23; 20:16-22; Prov 31:26). As we have seen, Deborah was appointed by God as a judge (Judg 2:16; Neh 9:27) and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment (Judg 4:4-5). When the enemies obstructed the roads so that it was impossible for the people to assemble before the Lord, she decided upon military action”.¹⁶

Larson, points out that Paul was not attempting to establish a fashion guide for worship, but he was addressing the culture and climate of the church. This directive was “aimed at the women in Ephesus where these particular styles were disrupting and interfering with worship. Perhaps some insensitive women were flaunting their dress and jewelry before the poor in a way that caused a disturbance in the church”.¹⁷ Although this attire was common to women of wealth, Paul was attempting to control the distractions within worship. Kroeger points out “When we approach the study of Scripture, we need first to think of the scope of its message. The Bible is not a book of oppression for women or

¹⁵ Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century*, 123.

¹⁶ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 18.

¹⁷ Knute Larson, *Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 167.

anyone else. It has repeatedly proven to be an instrument of liberation for God's people".¹⁸ In verse 9, it is obvious that there is a problem concerning the outward appearance of the women who attended worship. If verses 10-15 are read in conjunction with verse 9, one could assume that some women were distracting, boisterous, and at times completely dominating the worship experience.¹⁹ This further proves that this passage was meant to address worship in Ephesus and not to establish a universal law for all women.

In Ephesus, the diverse cultures certainly had an impact on women and their position in society. The cult of Artemis was a major problem for Timothy and the early Christian church. It was largely patterned after the Amazon society, which was dominated by women.²⁰ In their society the women went to war, they worked, and they controlled government while the men were viewed as their subjects.²¹ With this type of influence on the cult of Artemis, they were a force to be reckoned within the early church at Ephesus. George Thomson quoted E. C. Picard in his description of Artemis the Ephesian goddess: "The whole realm of nature belonged to her. She presided over the spring blossoms and the fertilization of the soil. She reigned over the elements, ruled the air and waters. She governed the life of beasts, taming the wild ones and protecting the tame. By turns a benefactress and a dealer of death, healer of sickness and goddess of health, she was also the guide of souls on their journey beyond the grave".²² The Artemis cult's teachings were in opposition to the doctrine of Christianity taught by Timothy.

¹⁸ Kroger and Kroger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 29.

¹⁹ Gritz, Paul, *Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century*, 32.

²⁰ George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society, The Prehistoric AEGEAN* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1949), 294.

²¹ Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society, The Prehistoric AEGEAN*, 287.

²² Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society, The Prehistoric AEGEAN*. 238.

Since some of the new converts were former cult members, chaos infiltrated the church because of the rituals and practices that accompanied them. It is important also to note that verse 9 deals with outward appearance while verse 10 deals with the inner being.²³

He instructed that women were to “adorn themselves in modest apparel”.

“Adorn” when translated to Greek (*kos meo*) means to arrange or put in order. While Paul is directly addressing the attire of women, it also provides insight on the chaotic nature of the church in Ephesus. It means not only were they to adorn themselves, but they were to do so modestly (*kos mios*) or decently.²⁴ Their apparel was not to be gaudy. Perhaps Paul pursues this approach, (dealing with the outward appearance first) because many precepts could be drawn about a person from visual encounter alone. Paul alludes that these women were so extravagant in their attire, and gaudy in their appearance, that they distracted from the worship service.²⁵ Again, the emphasis was not to demoralize women, but to control public worship. Therefore, a correct interpretation of this passage does not yield a second-class status to women. When Paul encouraged the women to put themselves in order, it could also be symbolic for the purpose of his overall motive; which was to put the church in order, due to its chaotic atmosphere. It appears that the church at Ephesus had begun to mirror the pagan world. Women were to “adorn themselves in modest apparel” as a means of displaying their inner godliness and their change from their cultic beliefs and practices. Paul was not abject to women beautifying themselves, but he was speaking against provocative attire that created lustful desires and

²³ Alvah Hovey, ed., *The American Commentary: First and Second Timothy Peter* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1890), 98.

²⁴ W.E. Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers* (McLean: MacDonald Publishing, 1979), 310.

²⁵ Frank E. Gaebelin, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 170.

distractions from the truth of the gospel.

Paul would not have practiced sound doctrine if he merely told the women how not to dress without giving illustration of how to dress. He informed them that they were to dress with “shamefacedness and sobriety”. Shamefacedness (*aidos*) focuses on demeanor in church while sobriety (*sophrosune*) addressed the soundness of mind.²⁶ Much is to be learned from the use of these two words. First, *aidos* focused on behavior that is outwardly directed toward others, which offers further information regarding their conduct in public. Since this epistle is focused on correcting a wrong during worship, it is safe to conclude that their actions were unruly. In the same manner he tells them that they must have *sophrosune* of the mind – sound mindedness.²⁷ This is in contrast to shamefacedness because now the focus is inward. Although *aidos* and *sophrosune* focus on the outward and inward respectively, they form a common bond in explaining acceptable behavior of the total being. One additional note regarding verse 9, is its dividing points or shifts in focus. From the beginning of verse 9 up to sobriety, the focus is outward.²⁸ From (and including) sobriety through verse 11, the focus appears to be inward.

In verse 10, Paul says that women should dress in a manner that shows inward godliness. If there is sincere devotion to Christ and a true desire to worship him, then the outward appearance should reflect it. The conjunction “but” signals a shift in direction. The directional shift is from a woman of the world to a woman “professing godliness.”

²⁶ Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 417.

²⁷ Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 418.

²⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. VI*. (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1714), 681.

“Becometh” (*prepo*) signifies being conspicuous among many which should have been an attribute of godly women.²⁹ When viewed in context of these verses, Paul is emphasizing that those actions, which reflect “professing godliness”, ought to be the area of focus. When verses 9 and 10 are viewed together, the overall theme suggests that the inner being has to be orderly first, and then the attitude and spirit of the inner being will permeate outwardly. As this inner spirit continues to work outwardly, good works result. Women who are true to their commitment to Christ should be noticeably different from those that participate in pagan worship. It is the proper application of expositional sermons that create spiritual growth; even in adverse situations.

In contrast to the preceding verses, verses 11 and 12 appear to be focused toward women already in the church, but who are possibly heretical in their practices. As previously stated, “The ancient shrine of Artemis at Ephesus -Diana of the Ephesians - was founded by Amazons. This tradition has been confirmed by excavations, which have brought to light statutory groups of female hunters”.³⁰ The significance of the Amazons will perhaps be clearer after further explanation of who the Amazons were. As a society governed by women and women being the head of the household, the dominance in attitude was a natural byproduct. Keeping that in mind, for the new converts adhering to the command to learn in silence with all subjection could be viewed as earth shattering for them. In contrast, there was another group of new converts who were Jews, and they brought their beliefs and practices to the church. It was necessary to for Timothy to attempt to foster as much peace between the newly converted pagans and the newly converted Jews on the subject of women. In their culture, the man was the dominant

²⁹ Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 60.

³⁰ Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society, The Prehistoric AEGEAN*, 289.

figure. Therefore, even the idea of letting women participate brought controversy.³¹ So, the congregational make up consisted of men and women from pagan practices and varying beliefs, which yielded chaotic influences in worship. Some of the women were from the Amazon influences while some of the men were from the traditional Jewish background. Therefore, the task of combining these various cultures in harmony, while establishing sound doctrine proved to be monumental.

As a result, dominant women, dominant men, docile women, and docile men, along with heretical teachers were all present in Ephesus; and many were present in the church. “Let the woman learn” was a major statement for many of the male Jews, while “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection” affected many of the new converts from the Amazon background. It is important for the proper context of this statement and these directives to be examined.

The type of learning indicated is believed to be *manthano*, which is to increase one's knowledge. “To be in silence can mean ‘to keep something a secret’. Secret knowledge was an important part of ancient mystery religion and of Gnosticism. There was the Gnostic notion of Eve as the creator of Adam, which was part of the ‘secret knowledge’ that was available to adherents. Other people were not let in on the secret”.³² The implication, therefore, is that Paul was not omitting them from learning (as some Jews may have wanted), but that it established a manner by which they were to continue learning.³³ Unfortunately, this verse has also been misinterpreted, thereby leaving some

³¹ Robert Tuck, *The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary, Vol. 29* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 79.

³² Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 103.

³³ Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century*, 129.

to believe that women were not to learn at all. The notion of keeping it a secret was something that many of the congregants would place high value on. Likewise, it is interesting to note that the NIV excluded “let” possibly because it was understood to be a continuation of Paul’s directives. It is possible that “let” can be viewed as a command to those Jews that sought to omit the role of women in public worship.

During the time of these directives, there was much more interaction between the speaker and the worshippers than there is in contemporary worship.³⁴ It was not uncommon for many teachers and preachers to be speaking simultaneously thereby competing with each other for attention. In addition, there were times during worship, when question and answer sessions transpired, some of which resulted in the women challenging the teachers who were predominately men. Some of the challenges were sincere, and others were only intended to distract from the flow of worship. Therefore, to prevent this type of confusion, women were to learn in silence.

Silence, by English definition, would impose a no talking or participating verbally rule. If this were the case, it would certainly control some of the noise, but it would not be consistent with the type of silence that Scripture promotes. Gritz contends that total silence is problematic because “women were allowed to pray and prophesy aloud” (1 Cor 11:5).³⁵ There has been debate on whether silence has the same implication in our culture, as it did during the time of Paul’s letter to Timothy. Some suggests it implies the submissive manner the women are to learn and receive teachings on Christian principles. According to an article written by J. Keir Howard, “silence refers to a stoic virtue of inward peace it refers to a quietness of spirit, a gentleness of nature, and is the exact

³⁴ William Urwick, *The Introduction to the New Testament* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1869), 45.

³⁵ Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century*, 132.

equivalent of the 'meek and quiet (*hesuchios*) spirit."³⁶ If they were to learn in silence (quietness of spirit), they would be open to the teachings of the gospel and not comparing it to the pagan teachings that many of them were accustomed to. One would conclude that this was a response to those women who were boisterous in worship; not to all women everywhere.

Let us examine the use of the word "subjection." This type of subjection (*hupotage*) reflects a willful submission.³⁷ In the case of this verse, women were to willfully submit to learning with a meek and peaceful spirit. For the godly woman this type of subjection would have been self-imposed. However, for the ungodly, non-converted women who infiltrated the church with pagan practices, this command would be repulsive. It is worthy of noting the placement of such a command. Verse 10 offers directives that pertain to a woman "professing godliness". The use of "let" in verse 11 functions as an auxiliary, which offers subsidiary assistance to the godliness described in verse 10.

Coupled with learning in silence with a peaceful spirit that Paul imposed, was the directive in verse 12, which states "But I suffer not a woman to teach". In verse 11 the emphasis focused on how those boisterous women should learn. They were not to be banned from worship, nor denied the opportunity to learn, however, verse 12 places some extra commentary on how they were to participate. The clause "I suffer not" adds not only to Paul's authority, but it also leaves no doubt about the origin of the command. From the perspective of the elder members of the church, Timothy's youth could have

³⁶ Howard J. Keir, "Neither Male Nor Female: An Examination of the Status of Women in the New Testament", *Evangelical Quarterly* 55 (Jan. 1983): 37.

³⁷ Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 321.

posed a problem as indicated in 1 Tim 4:12. Therefore, Paul added to the weight of his directive by using *epitrepo* which many believe equates to “I permit”, which as a true apostle of Christ, added authority. However, Kroeger offers other interpretations of the same word:

“...*epitrepo*, usually translated ‘I allow or permit’...can also mean to turn to, to give up to, to commit to one’s care, to entrust to, to trust to, to give way to, to suffer, to permit, to refer to, to concede, to agree to, or even to command... *Epitrepo* is preceded by the first negative of the sentence, *ouk*. Two words, *ou* and *me*, were normally used to introduce a negative thought in Greek”.³⁸

Paul compiles that with “not” which provides a negative action. In short, “I suffer not” can easily be translated “I do not permit”. Therefore, the “I do not permit” would be directed toward those new converts and boisterous women. Simon Robinson holds a different view of the passage. Robinson states that “does not mean that women are prohibited from praying or participating in public worship, but they should not teach the Word of God.”³⁹

The prohibition of women teaching altogether is not supported by Scripture. If we were to understand the use of *didaskein* as a prohibition against all women instructing men in any manner, we would find difficulties with other materials in the Pastorals. First, Titus 2:3 says that older women should be ‘teachers of what is excellent’. While their instruction certainly was to include young women, it was not limited to them. There are instances in which women have taught men in other New Testament passages, as well as holding leadership roles in establishing the early church. Secondly, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:2, ‘the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful persons who will be able to teach others also’. Here the

³⁸ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 82.

³⁹ Simon Robinson, *Opening Up 1 Timothy* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2004), 48.

word for ‘persons’ is *anthropos*, which is used to designate persons of either sex”.⁴⁰

Thomas Lea suggests that this directive is specifically pertaining to women when looking at what Paul said. “Paul’s words here spotlight a role women are to play in church meetings. They are to learn spiritual truth”.⁴¹ According to Lea, the fact that Paul was permitting them to learn reflects Christian practices which varied from the practices and customs of those who practiced Judaism. Furthermore, if the context of 1 Timothy 2:12 is neutral and refers only to the activity of teaching rather than to its positive or negative content, then it is the only time that *didaskhein* is so used in the Pastorals...we believe that the verb here forbids women to teach a wrong doctrine, just as 1 Tim 1:3-4 and Titus 1:9-14 also forbid false teaching”.⁴²

An alternative interpretation of the meaning of verse 11 provided by Kroeger indicates the following:

In the pastoral Epistles, *didaskhein* is used in contexts which express or imply the content of the teaching, whether the word is used of the false doctrines which the opponents promulgated (1 Tim 1:3, 7, 4:1, 6:3, 2 Tim 4:3, Titus 1:11) or of instruction in the truth (1 Tim 1:10, 2:7, 4:11, 13, 16, 5:17, 6:1-3, 2 Tim 1:11, 2:24, 3:10, 16, 4:2-3 Titus 1:9, 2:1, 3,7,10)”, the issue is what is taught, not who is teaching it.⁴³

To Alvin Hovey it appears that Paul not only instructed that women were not to teach, he also added that they were not to “usurp authority”. Alvah Hovey holds to a different belief. He stated, when dealing with the issue of women teaching: “The whole passage relates to the public worship of the church; the context, therefore, plainly limits

⁴⁰ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 81.

⁴¹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *The New American Commentary 1,2 Timothy Titus* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 83.

⁴² Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 81.

⁴³ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 82.

the word ‘teach’ as used here, to teaching or preaching in the public assembly”.⁴⁴ Many Bible readers readily attempt to search the Scriptures for an exception to this directive. The assumption is, that if there is any evidence to suggest a contradiction of teaching, then it is not a valid command. John Calvin addressed this issue with the following: “if women were at one time prophets or teachers, it does not automatically dismiss the intended order of governing, but is a “supernatural occurrence performed by he who is above all law”.⁴⁵ It was a natural tendency for some women to be headstrong or dominant given the strong Artemis influence. Undoubtedly, since there was more interaction with these errant women who were in the congregation, and who, at times attempted to take over the worship services. Directives had to be given to establish order. If these disruptions were not handled and allowed to continue, it would have been considered a usurpation of authority and would thereby be out of order.

Ordinarily the New Testament word for ‘to bear power’ is *kurieuein* or *exousiazein*. But, here a different term is used, one that has other meanings as well.

“*Authentein*, the verb in question, is defined in New Testament dictionaries as meaning to usurp authority or to dominate, although Greek writers used the term to imply other values such as to kill someone, to begin something or be responsible for the initiation of something, to lay claim to property as being one’s own, to claim to be the author of something, and so forth”.⁴⁶

Authentein and the derivatives of the word are used elsewhere in the New Testament in a variety of instances, but have a common chord in principle meaning. Arichea has noted that to have authority, when translated from Greek, in addition to the meanings listed above, can also denote “interrupt in which case what verse 12 is saying is

⁴⁴ Hovey, *The American Commentary: First and Second Timothy Peter*, 67.

⁴⁵ Jean Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 151.

⁴⁶ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 37.

that the women should remain completely quiet during the meetings and should not interrupt the men teachers in any way”⁴⁷

“Christ is elsewhere called the *authentes* (author) and introducer of a new law of salvation, *authentes* (originator) and leader of the work of the gospel, the teacher and *authentes* (prime mover) of laws and teachings whereby the power of our Savior is revealed. ‘Before the earth and starry heaven, he was the originating [*authentes*] Word, along with the Father and Holy Spirit”.⁴⁸

The translation that uses “usurp” would be a reasonable usage considering the dominating characteristics of the Amazon that were still influential in the Ephesian church.

The usage of “usurp” is interesting because it implies leadership by force, although there is no given right to do so. Paul further specified that women were not to have authority “over the man”. In its traditional interpretation, it would appear that Paul was limiting women only to teaching themselves and children. The Greek word that best depicts the type of “over” implied is *proistemi*, (which is *lito* “lead” or “to stand before”), then in that instance, Paul is prohibiting women from leading (in an authoritative manner in public worship) over the man. The idea is that women should submit to the authority of the elders, leaving the teaching and preaching to them.⁴⁹ This position appears to contradict other passages where women are used in ministry and societal development. If the definition is applied that means “to stand before,” it gives a vivid picture of what was possibly taking place during their chaotic worship experiences, thereby causing Paul to render a word of correction. As a result, a traditional understanding has mingled the cultural practices of the false religions, with the problems

⁴⁷ Daniel C, Arichea, and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's letter to the Galatians* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 59.

⁴⁸ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 100.

⁴⁹ Robinson, S. J. (2004). *Opening up 1 Timothy* (48). Leominster: Day One Publications.

experienced in public worship and have concluded that some of the women were standing and creating distractions while someone else, possibly Timothy, was preaching. If this were the case, then Paul's corrective measures were necessary for that worship experience, and were not meant to be universal. It is also possible that Paul was addressing the heretical teaching that Eve was the creator of Adam, as taught by the Gnostics. Kroeger points out:

“If we were to read 1 Timothy 2:12 as ‘I do not allow a woman to teach nor to proclaim herself author of man,’ we can understand the content of the forbidden teaching as being the notion that woman was responsible for the creation of man. We recall that a preoccupation with controversial genealogies, the matter of origins, was one of the principal characteristics of the opponents in the Pastorals. In this case, we would understand the *oude* as linking together two connected ideas. Then the thought might flow thus:
I do not permit woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures] [or that she keeps it a secret.] For Adam was created first, then Eve.”⁵⁰

There is also the interpretation that this verse attributes only to wives - possibly deaconesses, although this view is not widely held. Nothing in the text prior to verse 12 suggests a shift from women in general to wives specifically. Although passages in 1 Cor 14:34, Eph 5:22, Col 3:18, Titus 2:5, and spoke specifically to wives, the presupposition that this passage of Scripture falls within those realms would be errant.⁵¹ Given the established climate of the church, the heretical teachings, the cultic climate, and the pagan practices, it can easily be concluded that this directive is to clear up problematic and chaotic teaching of certain women – not all women. Minimizing Paul's illustration of Adam and Eve to merely pertaining to married couples does not capture the intent of his statement. Just because these teachings parallel those pertaining to husbands and wives,

⁵⁰ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 103.

⁵¹ Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 97.

does not mean that these verses were only intended for them. If however, it is directed to women in general--it automatically includes wives. The type of teaching (didasko) Paul was speaking about was from an authoritative, domineering perspective.⁵² It was these actions that Paul forbade in public worship.

There are some who object to this teaching using Galatians 3:28 to justify an authoritative dominant role for women. However, Galatians 3:28 focuses on the equality of value and essence of all who are in Christ Jesus. It cannot be misconstrued and used to support an elimination of role distinctions or functions. All persons in Christ have the same value, but not the same function in the Body of Christ. Therefore, just as this verse cannot be used for argument of order and function, it can be used as an argument for value. As stated, both men and women have the same value in Christ, so women cannot be devalued by any scriptural arguments.

A literal rendering of *so there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women* may be quite misleading. In a sense the phrase *in union with Christ Jesus* applies not only to the “oneness” but also to the basis for difference. It may, therefore, be important in some languages to say “so as far as your being joined to Christ Jesus is concerned, there is no difference between how this takes place for Jews and Gentiles, for slaves and free men, for men and women; you are all just like one person in being joined closely to Christ Jesus,” or “... you are all the same in being closely tied to Christ Jesus.”⁵³ The apostle’s object here is not, as in 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11–15, to exhort to the performance of certain mutual duties on the ground

⁵² Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 60.

⁵³ Daniel C. Arichea, and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's letter to the Galatians* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 85.

of the unity which in Christ is established among all believers, but to enforce the view that each individual's title to the inheritance is altogether irrespective of external distinctions, and is based entirely, in one case as well as in another, upon his being clothed with Christ.⁵⁴

Galatians 3:28 cannot legitimately be used either as evidence or counterevidence in this debate. It is regrettable that recent discussions of this theme have obscured the amazing good news Paul set forth in this verse. There is a unity in the body of Christ and an equality of access to salvation through faith in Jesus.⁵⁵ In Jesus Christ we have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light. This means that Christians have been liberated from the demonic forces of racism, materialism, and sexism. This has happened not through assimilation to the politically correct agenda of the world around us but rather through the inner transformation and liberation brought about through the sending of God's Holy Spirit into our hearts.⁵⁶ Gritz recorded:

False teachers had encouraged some women, including wives, to flaunt respected behavior and traditional roles. Some women dressed indecently. Some wives exalted their Christian freedom and denigrated their husbands in public. They have been deceived by wayward elders. Wives who did not submit to sound doctrine but to unorthodox notions and instructed their husbands in public reminds one of Eve's behavior.⁵⁷

In short, the reason for submission is not based on the order of creation and the dominion of man established by God, but is focused on the abolishment of heretical teachings and disruptions to public worship in Ephesus.

In verse 13, when Paul points out that Adam was created first, and Eve secondly,

⁵⁴H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *The Pulpit Commentary: Galatians* (Bellingham: 2004), 146.

⁵⁵Timothy George, *The New American Commentary Vol. 30: Galatians* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 291.

⁵⁶George, *The New American Commentary Vol. 30: Galatians*, 292.

⁵⁷Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century*, 138.

at first glance, it has the undertone of suggesting that order of creation justifies supremacy, but that is not what was being argued here. If that were the case, it would suggest that many other creations are of higher importance because they were created first, (including animals), even though God gave Adam dominion. Thomas also adds: “The designation of Adam as ‘formed first’ reflects the Jewish practice of primogeniture, where the firstborn male inherited a double portion of the inheritance and the responsibility of leadership in the home and worship” (Deut 21:15-17).⁵⁸

“The Bible speaks of man and woman as being equally commissioned to have dominion over the earth and to fill it (Gen 1:26-28) and as being equally made in God’s image:

When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God. It would perhaps be more just to postulate that Paul, when he speaks of Adam, has in mind both male and female, as does the writer of Genesis 5:1-2. Here ‘Adam’ is a generic name for humankind, as it is in Genesis 1:27-28. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them ‘humankind’ [literally, Adam-here used generically] when they were created”(Gen 5:1-2).⁵⁹

Likewise, “*Parabasis*, the same Greek word, is used in both cases.

Bilezikian points out that in Genesis 1:26, God makes a statement of purpose in His creation of male and female, that both are created in His image. In the structure of the verse, God uses the general word for “man” thereby meaning male and female. Meaning therefore, that both male and female are the “image-bearers” of God. Bilezikian goes on to point out that Genesis 1:27 insures that Genesis 1:26 is not a misprint, because it specifically stages male and female. “Femaleness pertains to the image of God as fully

⁵⁸ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *The New American Commentary 1,2 Timothy Titus* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 87.

⁵⁹ Kroeger and Kroger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 18.

as maleness”.⁶⁰ Bilezikian states out that God then tells them both to be fruitful and multiply the earth, and male cannot do that without female, thereby showing the significance and necessity of both. In chapter two, the creation of Eve, being from the side of Adam, Bilezikian believes is proof of the significance of females. He states that if Eve would have been created from ground just as Adam, one could have possibly argued of a lesser degree from man, but since she came from Adam’s bone, being of the same source and material, there is equality. “There is no evidence in the creation text for the temporal primacy of Adam to be interpreted as supremacy or rulership. Such a concept is present neither in the Old Testament nor in the New”⁶¹ According to Bilezikian the text pertaining to The Creation does not have within it any hierarchical significance regarding the fact that man was created before woman.

A contrary view is held by C. A. Trentham who wrote: “In verse 13, Paul uses the Genesis account of creation to establish the primacy of man and to point out that it was through Eve that Adam fell. The first time that the woman taught man was when Eve taught Adam to eat forbidden fruit”.⁶² Though this quote may appear harsh in its bluntness, it is reflective of the traditional view of women and their contribution to church and society. Over time, it has created a chasm not only in the minds and spirits of some women, but also in the church.

Verse 14 clearly depicts Adam and Eve on opposite ends of the continuum. “Adam was not deceived”, but the “woman” was deceived illustrates this point. The results of Eve's deception was transgression against God. After Eve ate the fruit and before Adam ate - nothing happened to mankind. It did, however, create a momentary

⁶⁰ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 23.

⁶¹ Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*. 31.

⁶² Trentham, *Studies in Timothy*, 72.

separation because one stood sinless and the other stood sinful. However, after Adam ate the fruit, mankind fell because he carried the seed. Therefore, the traditional view is that because Adam submitted to the will of Eve, death was the result. Could Paul have also been illustrating that the reason Ephesus was in such chaos was because the men had abandoned their rightful position? It is a possibility, although his primary focus was on women and their worship practices. Women were undoubtedly bringing their cultural experiences with them and it was imperative that it be corrected. Likewise, the Jewish men were bringing their cultural practices which also created problems. In 1 Timothy 5, there were women who believed in false doctrine and would attempt to implement or practice these beliefs in the homes of the congregations or the house churches. Passages: 2:9-15, 5:11-15, & 2 Timothy 3:6-7 indicate that these women had influence, especially on the younger women as reflected in 1 Timothy 4:1.⁶³

Verse 15 offers a beacon of hope to the church at Ephesus. Up to this point in the text, all of the focus has been on the people and their actions. The epistle served as a corrective rule in regard to practices at Ephesus, especially pertaining to worship. Despite all of the heretical acts, teachings, and influences, there was still a source of encouragement. Verse 8 focused on men (male and female) praying “without wrath or doubting”. Attitude and a spirit of peace are essential for true worship to occur. Verses 9 and 10 focused on women’s outward and inner essence. There was no need for gaudy apparel, but rather the focus needed to be on inner beauty. Verses 11 and 12 dealt with the manner in which women were to worship. In verses 13 and 14, Paul focused on Eve’s deception and transgression as a result of her acting outside of God’s ordained will.

⁶³ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 62.

However, verse 15 offers hope by salvation through grace. “Notwithstanding” could be interpreted “in spite of.” “In spite of” implies guilt but suggests an upcoming change. “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing” has a positive overtone; however, its precise meaning is debatable. Some commentators believe it points toward the incarnation, others believe it deals with physical deliverance, while others contend that it reminds of salvation despite experiencing the temporary judgment of the curse.

Each of these interpretations are problematic in their view; however, the overall theme of salvation through grace weaves a common cord. This verse is not meant to imply that works bring salvation, but it does impose discipline and constant focus on Christ. The believers were to continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. They were to “continue in faith” despite being persecuted, small in number (compared to the whole), and susceptible to heretical teachings. They were to continue in “charity and holiness” or *agape* and *hagiasmos*. The primary focus of this verse is on the actions of heretical women, and the salvation that will be available to them when they accept the true teaching of Christ.

Paul encourages those women, who were adhering to Christian teachings, to hold on to the faith and sound doctrine. They were to be “separated to God”, meaning not like the world. They were to totally leave the pagan practices that many of them followed. The pains they experience may be difficult, but they shall be saved. The worth and value of women cannot be disputed when it is measured against Scripture. Since, a common challenge that women face involves being viewed as less-than equal to men, it is important to preach an alternative and equally true, if not more accurate interpretation of the text and its meaning in light of the challenges encountered by African American

women and women in general.

If, in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 Paul limits the role of women and their value, then Galatians 3: 26-28 stands in contrast to that teaching thereby creating a biblical conflict. In Galatians 3: 26-28, Paul wrote: ‘You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus’. This passage reflects that even though there are gender differences, the value of the genders is equal. The equality that Paul establishes in the above passage was intended to restore to the church a view of the original account of the creation. Karren Waddles wrote:

“my study of Galatians, chapter three revealed that Paul was challenging the Galatians believers because they had returned to a salvation based on works. He makes the point that all believers are justified by faith – and faith alone. This truth applies to everyone who believes in Christ Jesus, whether Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free. Paul argues that regardless of one’s nationality, status, or gender, every believer stands on equal footing in Christ. There are no second-class citizens in God’s family”⁶⁴

When analyzing the whole Scripture text of 1 Timothy 2:8-15, the central theme revolves around practices and conduct in worship for both men and women. Over time, this passage became a highly debated text when attempting to apply its teachings to the contemporary church. Often times the misinterpretation of the text has led to misapplication. First Timothy 2:8-15 was not meant to be debated or oppressive, but was given to a particular church for a particular problem. As a letter written to Timothy, it was not intended to set or form standards for the universal church. Therefore, the many issues discussed made perfect sense to its intended audience. It is not the author’s responsibility to include information for an audience he is either not addressing or of

⁶⁴ Amanda Johnson, ed, *Our Voices* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 60.

which he is not knowledgeable. Therefore, the contemporary reader is responsible for attaining the necessary background information and surrounding issues to allow for a full and complete understanding of the text.

Since, in many instances that cannot be assumed, it is the responsibility of the presenter to cover all the bases. Verses 8-15, call for transforming and powerful prayer to be led by men and women in worship, proper attire, and godly works by women who profess to be Christians, orderly conduct, and persevering under persecution. Traditionally, this passage of scripture has been problematic for some Black congregations. Historically, the women of the Black communities have had to fill a void due to the absence of the male in the household and the church. Many times women have had to have various roles at home, church, and sometimes at work. Therefore, if passages such as 1 Timothy 2:8-15 are not taught appropriately, it could result in bitterness toward the speaker, or more importantly the Bible and God, thereby leading to the misapplication of the text.

For example, v. 9 is very often used with Deuteronomy 22:5 to suggest that women should not wear pants in church. In fact, this position ranges from women not wearing pants at all, to occasionally; to wearing them in the church building but not during worship service. However, Deuteronomy 22:5 has nothing to do with women wearing pants. In fact, pants had not been conceptualized at that time. The common teaching was that if women dressed modestly, and were true Christians, they would not wear pants. Since the teaching against women wearing pants has been around so long, and is so deeply ingrained in to some believers that they can never be comfortable with women wearing pants at church. The real focus ought to be centered on the intent of the

heart. A second problematic issue revolves around the role of the woman in church. Many women have thought that they were forbidden to teach during Sunday school, or speak in church, based on vv. 11-15. Some women argue if it had not been for the women, some churches would not exist; some men would not know Christ, and some homes would be shattered. This is a very true statement, especially as it pertains to many Black families that are being led by single women.

In conclusion, it is imperative when dealing with I Timothy that the cultural setting is made known initially. Many questions pertaining to the epistle's ambiguity, from a contemporary reader's mindset, can usually be answered by explaining the historical and cultural context. The fact is that the early church faced many challenges that the modern church does not have to deal with. There is no longer constant interaction with the congregation as it was in the early church. The passage must be taught with accuracy, free from prejudices and personal biases. God's Word does not seek to oppress or neglect any person. In this passage the attempt is to establish order in worship. Though it was initially intended for a group with some problems, it has since been accepted as universal by most. Dissension comes in with explanation and application. It does not minimize women, or the value of their souls, but rather establishes order during worship based on God's intended design.

In the contemporary church, authorship of the Pastorals is usually not a major debate. What is debated is how to appropriately apply passages like 1 Timothy 2: 8-15 in a society where so much has changed, including the status of women. The cultural context is important and must be explained; but it alone is not satisfactory. The textual traditions, language, and grammar must also be taught and understood. Heresies in

Ephesus are not apparent until background study has taken place, then passages like 1 Timothy are more likely to be understood and accepted. The heresies included: corrupt spirits, clothing, attitudes, false teachings and pagan influences on worship. As a result, the worship of God became disrupted and eventually diluted.

It is unlikely that Paul originally meant for this epistle to be a universal pattern for worship. It addressed a specific church at a specific time with a specific problem. However, since all Scripture is believed to be inspired by God, this Scripture has been accepted as profitable for teaching to all persons. Although the challenges of the first church are not (as a whole) identical to current challenges; some similarities can be seen and methods of correction applied. Therefore, it is not a problem to apply 1 Timothy's teachings to the local church as long as it is taught within the proper context Men and women are to pray without "wrath and doubting". More focus is to be directed toward the inner being rather than outer being. There is also an established order of God that has been in place since the beginning of creation that will not change. 1 Timothy was intended to be a corrective letter to implement peace in worship; and it can still do so today if it is taught within context and not used as an oppressive device.

When examining the theological overtone of 1 Timothy, it would better benefit the reader to look at the Pastoral Epistles collectively. Although 1 Timothy deals with prayer and worship specifically, and the operation of the church as a whole, there is still a larger theological picture - due reverence to God. The teachings of the Old Testament show the availability of God's salvation, Christ as Savior (in prophecy) divine inspiration of Scripture, and reverence to God which are all depicted in the Pastorals. For example, "God our Savior" is seen in 1 Tim 1:1, 2:3; Titus 1:3, 2:10, and 3:4). Throughout the Old

Testament, God is commonly referred to as the Savior of the Israelites. God's salvation is also found throughout the epistles as well, particularly 1 Tim 2:15, 2 Tim. 1:9, and Titus 3:5. Christ is seen as the “mediator between God and man” (1 Tim 2:5) and is reflected in “our savior, Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:10), “Christ Jesus our savior” (Titus 1:4), and “Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:6). Salvation is a gift from God and man cannot claim any of it on his own record or works.

Paul adds that all Scripture is inspired by God; therefore, men and women may be a vehicle God chooses to use. Though they are corrective and give directives for different situations, the Pastorals have a rooted purpose which is to give reverence to God through our actions toward each other. Their focus was to teach what God wanted for them to do in devotion to Him, and how they are to worship Him. The many fallacies that were addressed were: problem makers of Jewish descent (1:7-8), dietary restrictions (4:3), teachers claiming superior knowledge (6:20-21), word disputes (6:4), fables and genealogies (1:4), and false teachers (4:2, 6:5). The corrections were given in order that they (Ephesians) stand firm on sound doctrine and focus on Christ. Bilezikian states that some will find that their non-discriminating practices in church and family life are God-honoring and others will need to reevaluate their practices in order to provide holistic teaching. “Where God wants to create unity and cohesion, the enemy seeks to cause alienation and separation...nowhere does the Scripture command us to develop our sex-role awareness as males and females”.⁶⁵

Providing an exegetical study on the biblical passage that creates a hindrance for some of the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church should bring clarity as to how they are viewed by God, thereby dispelling the feeling of being less valuable and less that

⁶⁵ Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 208.

equal to men. Once the biblical framework is established, it should also serve as a foundation for women to address the other areas of challenge they face in life. To further address the belief that expository preaching, when appropriately applied, will lead to the spiritual growth of women of multiple generations at Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, chapter three will examine the challenges that women of multiple generations face, through the writings and statistical data others have compiled regarding the topic. In addition, the differences in learning styles between genders will be reviewed.

CHAPTER 3

THE EXPLORATION OF CHALLENGES TO WOMEN, THROUGH RESEARCH AND WRITING

In this chapter, the challenges facing women are explored. While the appropriate application of expository sermons in the lives of women of multiple generations is important, it is equally important to have a working knowledge of the types of challenges that are encumbering them. There are a variety of authors who have addressed the challenges of women, and some of their information will be reviewed in this chapter.

Preaching is the proclamation of the gospel that leads to salvation. It is the good news that is announced (*euangelizomai* – to bring good news) to humanity. It has also been simply referred to as an announcement; with the content of the announcement depending on the context of the message. In general, preaching is the communication of a religious message to a group of people. True Christian preaching interprets the meaning of God's acts and Word into contemporary contexts. At this point the preacher must also take in mind the audience that the uncompromised message is being delivered to, in order to eliminate as many barriers as possible that could affect the reception of the message. A sermon becomes God's word to us only as God's servant reconstitutes the past realities of the biblical revelation into vital present experience.¹ For the contemporary preacher, according to Dr. Donald Sunukjian, she or he must know the demographics of the congregation, as well as the life experiences within the congregation. One of the primary groups that tend to be overlooked in sermonic proclamation is women. While women are the majority in attendance, sermons that intentionally address the challenges that women face are few and far between. In spite of

¹ Chad Brand et al., eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2001), 1322.

this reality, there has to be something that causes women to continue to attend church services, and grow spiritually. The power of the preached Word, equips believers to thrive in the midst of all challenges. It is expositional preaching that causes women to grow spiritually, regardless of age. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, in her book *Gender and Grace* examines various areas of women's involvement in the family, society, and the church. In chapter 12 of her book, Van Leeuwen addresses the male dominance that has been in the church for centuries which creates a challenge for women.²

In a study by William D. Howden, *Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching*, the factors that influence how an individual hears and responds to sermons are addressed.³ Howden wrote that demographic characteristics influence the response of an individual to a sermon. "Specifically, this study found that older people respond to sermons they hear more positively than do younger sermon hearers and that sermons have greater impact on women than on men".⁴ He states that sex, age, and education are variables that effect sermon responses. A 1980 survey of Newman and Wright questioned volunteer Catholic lay people pertaining to sermon effectiveness. In that study, Howden points out that age and sex were not factors, but education was a factor. Two years later, Pargament and Silverman administered a similar survey of selected persons of the Catholic Church and found that "sermons had more impact on well-educated hearers than on those with less education, and that age and sex were both significant variables, with men reporting greater sermon impact than women, and older hearers reporting greater impact than

² Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *Gender and Grace* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 68.

³ William D. Howden, "Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching", 194

⁴ Howden, "Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching", 196.

younger ones”.⁵ These two studies reveal conflicting results. One common chord that can be gleaned from the two studies, as different as they may be, is that sermons affect people differently, and their experiences, challenges, and even gender are major variables. “Women tend to use more words to communicate their thoughts, experiences, ideas, history, and emotions than men do. Men tend to narrow their focus down to one thing at a time while women tend to be big picture communicators. Men prefer to stay on task when communicating while women prefer to make sure they communicate all the various threads that connect to the point or points they want to make.”⁶ For many people, these differences are explained scientifically. However, for other people, it is explained according to the design of God at creation. Rhonda H. Kelley in her article:

“Communication between Men and Women in the Context of the Christian Community” says:

“Scripture teaches about the uniqueness of men and women. While created in the image of God with equality of worth and value, men and women are different by design and function. Gender differences are apparent physically and behaviorally. Men and women differ in the way they think, feel, act, and talk. In fact, one of the most striking differences between the sexes is the unique ways that men and women communicate”.⁷

There are some general differences in communication and listening methods that do not hinge upon whether a person is Christian or non-Christian, churchd or unchurchd. Kelley goes on to state that “men and women have unique ways of

⁵ Howden, “Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching”, 196.

⁶ Joseph Malinak and Sarah Malinak, “Bridge the Listening Gap Between Men and Women”, Ezine Articles, <http://ezinearticles.com/?Bridge-the-Listening-Gap-Between-Men-and-Women&id=1424286>, (accessed October 12, 2010).

⁷ Rhonda H. Kelley, “Communication between Men and Women in the Context of the Christian Community, The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood”, <http://www.modlinguistics.com/Sociolinguistics/gender/Communication%20between%20Men%20and%20Women%20in%20the%20Context%20of%20the%20Christian%20Community.htm>, (accessed October 1, 2010).

expressing their thoughts and feelings...the church, as a body of believers, male and female, is challenged by these differences in communicative style.”⁸ These gender differences, and the impact of them, are experienced in informal conversations, Bible study classes, church committee meetings, counseling sessions, and pulpit preaching. There is an emerging term introduced by Deborah Tannen to describe the dialect that is determined by the sexual gender of the speaker or preacher known as “genderlect”. It has the express purpose of taking the communication differences between men and women into consideration, and attempting to eliminate some of the communication barriers. The term suggests how it may be necessary to adjust the communication style of the speaker to that of the listener, for the sake of getting the intended point across. Pastors and preachers can not afford to overlook the value of effectively communicating to women within the congregation. Howden points out that a subsequent survey administered in 1986, involving different measuring methods on two separate scales, yielded that “women responded to the sermons significantly more positively than did men”.⁹ This response is in spite of societal, familial, and religious acts of discrimination.

As we further examine how valuable the preached word is to women of multiple generations, it is important to point out that many of their experiences are shared. There are some aspects of our society that discriminate according to gender – whether intentional or subtly imbedded in precepts, actions, or attitudes. Although there are varying degrees of discrimination, its overall effect is still a hindrance to and for women. For many women, the strategies employed to overcome the discrimination that is

⁸ Rhonda H. Kelley, “Communication between Men and Women in the Context of the Christian Community”.

⁹ Howden, *Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching* 199.

experienced, is sought from the Word of God and from the church. Since many of these challenges can lead to an internal processing of self, how women are viewed according to God is extremely valuable. It is through the power of preaching that women can deal with these and other challenges that women face completely. The power of preaching ignites faith within the hearer and propels them into action based on what has been received by faith. On many of the unspoken challenges that are present within the congregation, of both men and women, it is faith in God that effects change. It is through expository preaching that the truth of God's word is made known to the congregant. And it is the application of the preached Word of that results in changed lives.

Frank Newport, in "Just Why Do Americans Attend Church?", noted that "women of all ages are more likely than men to attend church."¹⁰ The article points out that there are region-specific effects, which indicate that residents of Southern states and of Utah are more likely to attend church than New England or West coast residents. There is a race effect as well, with Black Americans more likely to attend church services on average than White Americans"¹¹. A survey of 562 church attendees was given, and some of the results are as follows: 23% attend for growth and guidance, 20% stated that it kept them "grounded/inspired", 15% stated it was for faith purposes, 15% stated it was to worship God, 12% stated it was because they believed in God, and 12% stated it was because of their upbringing. Some of the people gave multiple reasons for attending church. One valuable truth that comes from the survey is that the majority of the people who attend church are seeking something from someone greater than themselves – God. The survey further revealed that women are "slightly more likely to mention that they

¹⁰ Frank Newport, "Just Why Do Americans Attend Church?" April 6, 2007, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/27124/just-why-americans-attend-church.aspx> (accessed May 27, 2010).

¹¹ Newport, "Just Why Do Americans Attend Church?"

attend because of a need to keep grounded and inspired...”.¹² When the results are compared according to gender: 23% of the women surveyed reported they attend for spiritual growth/guidance, 23% because it keeps them grounded/inspired, 14% because it was their faith, 17% to worship God, 16% for fellowship, 9% because of belief in God, and 10% because of upbringing. There is an increasing amount of attention and study being given to the challenges that women face, and how the Word of God impacts how those challenges are addressed. According to Dr. Flake, a survey conducted by the United States Department of Justice reveals that African American women are particularly likely to use religious coping strategies and are more likely to seek help from a minister than from any other helping professional.¹³

In recent years, there has been a greater awareness of the challenges facing women along with attempts to address those challenges. Dr. Elaine Flake, in her book *God in Her Midst*, examines her theological evolution into what she calls a “womanist theology”. According to Flake,

“a womanist perspective on preaching maintains that if the preached word is to serve its salvific and liberating purposes for all people, African American women’s experiences and perspective must be acknowledged and included. If preaching is to truly reach the hearts, minds, and souls of African American women, preachers must employ an analysis of Scripture that reconstructs the Word of God in ways that are liberating to women as well as men and that reflect the totality of the African American experience”¹⁴.

In the above quote, when Flake mentions the need to “employ an analysis of Scripture that reconstructs”, she is not speaking of rewriting the Word of God to fit one’s ideologies, but she is suggesting that it if viewed from a perspective of liberation, rather

¹² Newport, “Just Why Do Americans Attend Church?”.

¹³ Elaine Flake, *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Wounded Women* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2007), xiv.

¹⁴ Flake, *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Wounded Women*, xv.

than condemnation. She provides examples of alternative means of examining Hagar, Job's wife, and others without distorting the Scripture passage.

Chapters 2 and 3 of her book examines the evolution of a womanist theology as resulting from deficiencies in the black liberation and feminist theology. Flake makes it clear that a womanist theology does not bash men, because if it did, it would only be enacting the same type of marginalization and segregation toward men that women have experienced. The intent of the womanist theology however, is not only to bring an awareness to the challenges facing women, but to suggest practical methods of addressing them, for the healing of women.

Chapter 4 consists of sermonic presentations on three women of the bible, and how an alternative approach can be used when preaching about them, that can examine their positive aspects instead of the more common negative ones. She looked at varying ways of preaching about Job's wife (Job 2), Hagar (Gen 21:9-21), and A Desperate Woman (Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48). Each of these women represent a variety of challenges that many women within most congregations are dealing with on a daily basis, and Flake believes an alternative view will strengthen them. Whether it is in the home, on the job, or within them, there are challenges that are often overlooked in preaching.¹⁵ Likewise, her stated purpose for the book is to bring an awareness of the necessity of preaching, and how it, when handled appropriately, will bring empowerment and liberation to marginalized and hurting African American women, as well as others. She recounts her upbringing in the church, and the teachings that she grew up hearing and believing. In these teachings, the role of women in ministry, as well as those in society were minimized and in many instances overlooked altogether.

¹⁵ Flake, *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Wounded Women*, 1.

Some of the challenges that face African American women are addressed in her writing, with the main one involving abuse – physical, sexual, and emotional. “While African American women have endured numerous forms of oppression, including poverty and abandonment, perhaps the most ubiquitous form of oppression has resulted from our experience as victims of physical and sexual abuse”.¹⁶ J. Lee Grady states “All over the world, male pride and cultural attitudes of masculine superiority have inflicted horrible wounds on women. For some women, the abuse began early when their fathers or other male relatives sexually molested them.”¹⁷ Grady goes on to add that many other women lost their innocence when uncaring boyfriends raped them. Some women married the man of their dreams, and then experienced physical violence that lasted for years. “If the preacher is aware of these challenges that women are dealing with, then in the delivery of the sermon, they must be addressed and the women must be empowered”.¹⁸ In examining the abuses, Flake states:

United States Department of Justice statistics indicate that African American women experience violence at disproportionate levels. African American women have the highest rate of intimate violence, which is violence perpetrated by a spouse, former spouse, or boyfriend of any ethnic group, and are three times more likely than white women to die at the hands of an intimate partner”.¹⁹

The importance of this survey is even greater when understanding that research further reveals that seeking spiritual help in times of domestic abuse is not a new approach for African American women. The traditional response was “God will take care of it” and “pray and the Lord will change him”.²⁰ Taking practical steps in rectifying abusive

¹⁶ Flake, *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Wounded Women*, 2.

¹⁷ J. Lee Grady. *25 Tough Questions About Women and the Church* (Lake Mary: Charisma House, 2003), 4.

¹⁸ Flake, *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Wounded Women*, 2.

¹⁹ Department of Justice, *Violence by Intimates*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1998, no NCJ 167237, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/vi.pdf

²⁰ Flake, *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Wounded Women*, 7.

issues, does not negate God's ability to handle the situation.

Many times it is through an intentional effort to address these societal abuses and discriminatory actions that the issues are eliminated. Therefore, preaching that is aware of, and speaks to these issues aid in the holistic healing of women. Flake introduced five interpretive methods that she believes will assist the preacher in a holistic approach to sermon presentations. The suggested methodologies are to: Affirm, Show Sensitivity, Honor Tradition, Liberate, and Acknowledge African Ancestry.

She adds that the womanist interpretation may be offensive to both men and women who resist preaching that is on the grounds of truth, and is approached with concern for female sensitivity issues. As a foundational basis, Dr. Flake wrote about the transformation taught by apostle Paul, and how it begins with the renewing of the mind. At that point, it is the preacher's responsibility to approach the text with integrity and accuracy, and to liberate all people. This is where the importance of preaching comes in.

Ray Stedman in his article: "The Primacy of Preaching", stated that "much of the present weakness in preaching is due to the failure of preachers to understand the uniqueness of what they are to preach, and its remarkable power to change a congregation, a community, a city, or even a nation".²¹ He goes on to state as it pertains to the importance of preaching: "It is the business of preaching to change the total worldview of every member of the congregation; to dispel the secular illusions which are widely believed around, and to identify and underscore the concepts and practices that are right, and to do this for each member".

In 1 Corinthians 2:7, Paul states that the preacher is to preach the wisdom of God,

²¹ Ray Stedman, "The Primacy of Preaching", Ray Stedman.org, <http://www.raystedman.org/thematic-studies/leadership/the-primacy-of-preaching> (accessed July 9, 2010).

a hidden mystery that will be for our glory. Stedman points out that glory means to “manifest the hidden values within”. Therefore, if the preached word glorifies God thereby glorifying the people of God, then it is “to display outwardly all that God made us to be” – including both women and men. Stedman points out that we are in the “midst of a joyless people, seeking fun continually, but unable to know joy”. Many of these people make up the majority of our congregations. They are male and female, young and old, believers and non-believers, and are of varied ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds – all searching for the truth of God’s word.

In an article written by Lisa Trei, in the *Stanford Report* entitled “Women Continue to Face Challenges, Despite Progress Since 1970s”, Nannerl Keohane, a political philosopher and former president of Duke University and Wellesley College, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, offered at least eight dimensions of life as a measurement of how society is doing in its treatment of women as equals. The eight dimensions are:

1. The extent to which women hold authority or positions of leadership;
2. The degree of flexibility in household and domestic arrangements;
3. Good provisions for the care of children;
4. Control over sexual and reproductive choices;
5. Reduction in sexual harassment;
6. Access to education;
7. Chances for meaningful work, equal pay and opportunities for promotion;
8. The degree to which cultural depictions of women acknowledge their personhood rather than dwelling solely on female sexuality²²

Keohane gave higher grades to society in areas dealing with education, and lower grades for areas dealing with the depiction of women. She denotes that direct sexual harassment has decreased, but it has not been eliminated totally. She points out that child

²² Lisa Trei. “Women Continue to Face Challenges, Despite Progress Since 1970s”, *Stanford Report*. <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2004/november10/irwg-11110.html> (accessed December 21, 2010).

care issues are extremely important. She states: “There are agonizing dilemmas about whether you want your child raised by someone else, whether you can stand the guilt of not being home with chocolate chip cookies when the kid comes home from school or contributing your share to the volunteer-mommy arrangements that structure their lives”.²³ Keohane concludes that while strides have been made, there is still “a long way to go for equity in these areas”.

Our Voices is a compilation of several topics, written by 10 women in 11 chapters. The authors of the chapters are from varying backgrounds and professions. There is a Christian counselor, an educator, a university administrator, physician, radio personality, financial planner, professional writers, and single moms. Amanda Johnson is the general editor. Each of the chapters addresses some of the challenges that women face on a daily basis. It is important for preachers to know that many women are dealing with a conglomeration of challenges simultaneously, yet the preached Word gives them the necessary strength to overcome and evolve. *Our Voices* seeks to highlight the many challenges that are often unnoticed in the lives of women by specifically addressing them through God’s Word. The challenges that are addressed in the book are: racism, sexuality, marriage, singleness, single parenting, finances, spirituality, health, self-esteem, and the church.

Chapter 1 written by Yolanda Powell, addresses the first challenge which is the importance of knowing and aligning with the will of God. Powell begins the chapter by writing “Black Christian women have traditionally overcome obstacles and troubling circumstances by remaining faithful to the spiritual anchors of our faith that are grounded in Jesus Christ. Our spiritual life is important to our existence; it is the most valuable

²³ Trei, “Women Continue to Face Challenges, Despite Progress Since 1970s.

asset that we possess”.²⁴ Powell says that there are at least four timeless elements that secures the lives of black women- which she refers to as their anchor. The four elements are:

- 1) Saving faith in Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Deliverer
- 2) Uncompromising belief in God’s Holy Word
- 3) Prayers uttered with an unshakable trust
- 4) Worship and singing aloud songs, hymns, and spiritual songs”.²⁵

Powell goes on to say:

The relevance and veracity of the Bible make it essential reading for the spiritual well-being of a woman yielded and empowered by the Spirit of God...Being led and directed by the Spirit of God is a win-win situation for the believing woman. Even though the way may seem steep or challenging, His presence and power reassures us that we will eventually reach our destination and fulfill our destiny.²⁶

Chapter 2 written by Sabrina D. Black, deals with the second challenge facing women which involves identity. Black explored the process by which women embrace who God says they are. Such question as: Who am I, Why am I here, Where did I come from, Why am I a part of this family, etc. are some of the questions that Black says women ask themselves as a means of searching for significance and developing a concept of self. There are multiple internal struggles that are present when attempting to develop an identity amidst society and in the sight of God. “Successes and failures in many areas of life are closely related to the way people have learned to view themselves and their relationships with others”.²⁷ According to Black, self-concept is acquired, arranged, and active. It is acquired over a period of time through experiences in life. It is arranged

²⁴ Yolanda Powell, ed. Amanda Johnson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “The Spirit-Empowered Life: Jesus Christ, Our Anchor” (Chicago: Moody Publishers 2010) 12.

²⁵ Powell, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “The Spirit-Empowered Life: Jesus Christ, Our Anchor”, 14.

²⁶ Yolanda Powell, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “The Spirit-Empowered Life: Jesus Christ, Our Anchor”, 17.

²⁷ Sabrina D. Black, ed. Amanda Johnson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “She Shall Be Called Woman: Embracing Who God Says I Am” (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 45.

because all of the life experiences are placed in certain ways in the mind that are believed to be a reflection of a present reality as well as who an individual is destined to become. The active nature of the process revolves around a continuous system that encompasses a person's perceived existence.

Chapter 3, written by Karen Waddles, examines the notion of purpose, which is the third challenge facing women. She starts with a scenario of a girl who dreamed of becoming a preacher, envision herself becoming a pastor, and with excitement shared with members of her church. The girl was surprised at the mixed reaction of the people. In the scenario, she states that some were in support, others were against it, and others were undecided. Waddles then asked the group of women how they would advise the girl, and their reaction was one of confusion. Some of the ladies were baffled, and full of questions. The purpose of this scenario was not to argue whether women are called to preach or not, but rather to introduce the two primary positions that serve as the basis by which purpose and function of women are determined. The two positions are *egalitarian* and *complementarian*. The egalitarian belief is: "since men and women share the image of God, and thus are equal in essence, no functional distinctions can be made between men and women".²⁸ These are the people who believe that women can preach and pastor. The complementarian belief is: "women have virtual freedom of service in the church, except as elder or preacher/teacher of men".²⁹ Waddles points out in this chapter that there are some non-negotiables even pertaining to controversial issues: 1) God's Word is truth, and 2) God has a tender heart for women and sees them as equal in worth to men.

²⁸ Karen Waddles, ed. Amanda Johnson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, "Our Purpose: A First Lady's Revolutionary Conversion" (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 56.

²⁹ Karen Waddles, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, "Our Purpose: A First Lady's Revolutionary Conversion", 56.

A fourth challenge facing women deal with the issues of health. In chapter 4, Dr. Taffy Anderson, a medical doctor, deals with the many health challenges that women face. According to Anderson, “76% of Black adults are overweight or obese and approximately 45% are obese...looking strictly at Black women, the statistics are alarming. By gender and race, this demographic is the leading group affected by the obesity problem, with a shocking 81.6% of Black women being overweight or obese and 53.9% suffering from obesity” (Johnson/Anderson 73). Obesity then serves as a catalyst for other health issues such as: Type 2 Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Disease, Stroke, Osteoarthritis, Cancer, etc.³⁰

Felicia Middlebrooks wrote chapter 5 on the issue of racism, which is the fifth challenge experienced more by minority women of color. She denotes that as a race, Black people tend to survive, cope, and adapt to the challenges racism brings, but there is still a constant struggle for equality. This struggle for equality, according to Middlebrooks, has “everything to do with having a fervent faith in the Almighty God. We must look to and lean on the God of our weary years to help us overcome the struggles...”.³¹ This spirit of racism has a resounding effect on Black Women. Ancella B. Livers and Keith A. Carver, in their book: *Leading in Black and White: Working Across the Racial Divide in Corporate America*: “For women the general stereotype is that they are supportive, cooperative nurturing, less competent than men, and treated as sexual objects. Black women are also forced to deal with a set of perceptions beyond those. They are often considered aggressive and too direct, assertive, and flashy for

³⁰ Taffy Anderson, ed. Amanda Johnson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “In Pursuit of a Healthy Lifestyle” (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 76.

³¹ Felicia Middlebrooks, ed. Amanda Johnson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “Racial Reconciliation: Our Ministry to Bridge the Gap” (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 94.

corporate America”.³²

Financial Issues are also concerns that congregations are laden with daily. In chapter 6, the issues of finance and fitness were discussed and represent a sixth challenge facing women. Lisa A. Crayton wrote that “a 2008 study by financial services giant ING found that Black women fretted more about money than they did about their health, job, appearance, or relationships”.³³ Like she noted that 47% of Black women stated that family obligations were a hindrance to them achieving their desired financial goals, and more than 70% of them had loaned money to family or friends in excess of \$500.00

A seventh challenge facing women deals with sexuality. Amanda Johnson highlights the various arenas of sexuality that effect women in their various seasons of life. She points out that sex is holistic and delightful, but some life challenges and changes can inhibit either the desire for, or the practice of sex. Depending on whether a woman is single or married, her views of sexuality may vary. Also, a young woman is likely to have a vastly different perspective of sex that a woman going through menopause. In any case, these are the issues that women come to church with, and their views are shaped, strengthened, or weakened by the word of God presented by the preacher. In the remaining chapters, topics dealing with married women, and single women are examine, all which further indicate how women rely on the Word of God for guidance, comfort, and clarity. In the midst of these challenges, women are still the largest attendees in church. This same fact is true regardless of ethnicity.

The Uncommon Woman, by Susie Larson focuses on how the Word of God

³² Ancella B. Livers and Keith A. Carver, *Leading in Black and White: Working Across the Racial Divide in Corporate America*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2003), 67.

³³ Lisa Crayton, ed. Amanda Johnson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “Money and Financial Fitness: Stretch, Save, and Share” (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 115.

reveals the value of women in spite of challenges. Larson introduces the need of Accepting Acceptance.³⁴ By definition, it means that women need to have the courage to face “foibles without it diminishing value. Accepting acceptance means refusing to let others define you, because God already has. Accepting acceptance means cherishing the fact that you’ve been bought with a price, and thus embracing the call to become more and more like Christ every day.”³⁵ Larson suggests that the key to “accepting acceptance involves knowing whose we [women] are.” She goes on to write, “the more we understand that our identity in Christ is continually secure and that no misstep, rejection, or judgment could ever change that, the more liberated we become for the opinions of others”.³⁶ Larson added that this type of security and acceptance allows women to grow in their identity thereby no longer allowing the opinions of others to have power over them.

It is the manner in which women respond to the circumstances they are presented with that determines whether they are common or uncommon. The key to the response is in their knowledge of how Jesus views them, and his active will for their lives. Within the life experiences of some women, circumstances leave them agonizing over betrayal, rejection, gender-discrimination, and character assassination. Through these experiences and other challenges, Larson says uncommon women must learn to forgive, receive, stand, and bow. John Bevere, in *The Bait of Satan* looks at the Greek word for “offense” which is *skandalon*, and explains that it refers to the part of a trap where the bait is connected.³⁷ According to him, “This shows us that hurts and offenses become a spiritual

³⁴ Susie Larson, *The Uncommon Woman*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008)21.

³⁵ Larson, *The Uncommon Woman*, 23.

³⁶ Larson, *The Uncommon Woman*, 25.

³⁷ John Bevere, *The Bait of Satan*, (Lake Mary: Charisma House, 2004), 11.

trap that the devil uses to ensnare us. Satan knows that if he can lure us to become angry or bitter toward someone, he can hold us in a prison of unforgiveness”.³⁸ These and others thoughts must be acknowledged by the preacher when preaching because it addresses areas of importance that aid in the holistic maturation and spiritual advancements of women.

In chapter six, Larson deals with the reality of depression that most women face, and how Jesus specifically came to set the captives free. In so doing, she points out that there is no past that Jesus is unable to erase. Therefore, she writes that “no one will be able to make us inferior because Jesus has made us whole”.³⁹ It again, is this holistic approach that the preacher must be aware of when preaching or teaching the word of God. Since the word of God is able to minister and reach all people, age and phase of life are not a hindrance to the ability of the word to reach them. This chapter is wrapped around addressing depression and despair that is ever present within the lives of both men and women within the congregation.

The overall aim of Larson’s book deals with how the uncommon woman must respond to God’s love, which is available in all situations. Since, in its basic element, love is an emotional sense, that many women are more familiar with. The preacher must know this because in the delivery of the word, if it does not entail some aspect of emotion, it may alienate a large segment of the congregation, thus leaving them broken. I believe this book provides additional insight on how many women process and handle the challenges of life. We know that God’s word declares that He is love. Therefore, even in the delivery of messages that will effect multiple generations, this understanding is

³⁸ Bevere, *The Bait of Satan*, 11.

³⁹ Larson, *The Uncommon Woman*, 95.

essential for effective delivery of the word.

In an article: *Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview*, George Barna reports that the younger a person is, the less likely they are to trust the Bible as their source of moral guidance or to believe that absolute moral truth exists.⁴⁰ For instance, 20% of adults 60 or older base their moral choices on the Bible and 18% of Baby Boomers do so, but only 13% of Baby Busters and a mere 9% of Mosaics follow suit. In the same manner, while four out of ten Boomers and Builders say moral truth is absolute, just 32% of busters and 25% of Mosaics hold that view.⁴¹

An article: *A Religious Portrait of African-Americans*, provides information regarding the religious beliefs and actions of African-Americans. It notes that the United States is generally considered a highly religious nation, and that “African-Americans are markedly more religious on a variety of measures than the U.S. population as a whole, including level of affiliation with a religion, attendance at religious services, frequency of prayer and religion’s importance in life”.⁴² In addition, The Landscape Survey also finds that nearly eight out of ten African Americans (79%) say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 56% among all U.S. adults. A large majority (72%) of African Americans who are unaffiliated with any particular faith way religion plays at least a somewhat important role in their lives; nearly half (45%) of unaffiliated African-Americans say religion is very important in their lives, roughly three times the percentage who says this among the religiously unaffiliated population overall (16%). More than half

⁴⁰ George Barna, “Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview”, Barna Group, (August 9, 2005), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/174-most-adults-feel-accepted-by-god-but-lack-a-biblical-worldview> (accessed September 5, 2010).

⁴¹ George Barna, “Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview”.

⁴² Neha Sahgai, “A Religious Portrait of African-Americans” January 30, 2009. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1099/religious-portrait-of-african-americans> (accessed September 6, 2010).

of African Americans (53%) report attending religious services at least once a week, more than three out of four (76%) say they pray on at least a daily basis and nearly nine out of ten (88%) indicate they are absolutely certain that God exists. On each of these measures, African Americans stand out as the most religiously committed ethnic group in the nation.⁴³

The survey further revealed that as in the population overall, African American men are significantly more likely than women to be unaffiliated with any religion (16% vs. 9%). African American women are somewhat more likely than African-American men to describe themselves as Protestant (82% of women vs. 72% of men). Among African-American women, 62% are members of historically black Protestant churches, 16% are affiliated with evangelical churches and 4% are mainline Protestant; among men, 55% are member of historically black churches, 14% are evangelical, and 4% are mainline Protestant.⁴⁴ African American women also stand out for their high level of religious commitment. More than eight out of ten black women (84%) say religion is very important to them, and roughly six out of ten (59%) say they attend religious services at least once a week. No group of men or women from any other racial or ethnic background exhibits comparably high levels of religious observance.⁴⁵

Ronald J. Allen in *Preaching and Practical Ministry*, writes that “Preaching has its deepest effect in a congregation when it draws its breath in positive connection with other things that happen in the Christian community”.⁴⁶ According to Allen, “The preacher interprets the situations of the congregations and of the larger world from the

⁴³ Neha Sahgai. “A Religious Portrait of African-Americans”.

⁴⁴ Neha Sahgai. “A Religious Portrait of African-Americans”.

⁴⁵ Neha Sahgai. “A Religious Portrait of African-Americans”.

⁴⁶ Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 15.

perspective of the gospel. The sermon is an exemplary instance in that it demonstrates in the setting of worship the practice of giving testimony that is to be a part of the everyday lives of the members of the community. When the people leave public worship, they should be able to interpret their immediate worlds and the larger world from the standpoint of the gospel.”⁴⁷

Alice Matthews attempts to point out important issues to help in the communication to women when preaching or teaching to them for their nurturing for the glory of God. In her book *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, she uses as her framework the command to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4, Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:37-40, and Luke 10:27. In chapter 1, the myths and parameters for speaking about women are addressed. Because Christians are called to love God with all of their hearts, and the manner in which the preacher can speak to the issues of both men and women, while respecting and being aware of the differences that exist in methods of decision making – particularly on issues of morality. In chapter 3, the focus is on the soul, or *psyche*. The attempt is to demonstrate how *psyche* or soul deals with issues of the mind. It is important therefore for the preacher to address the psychological matters of women from scriptural perspective in light of being aware of the differences in processing that were addressed in chapter 2. Matters ranging from low self-esteem, relationships, depression, and stress are key areas when attempting to establish wholeness in preaching.

In chapter 6, Matthews states that “many women are seriously occupied with the moral and spiritual dimensions of their lives. In that sense, they are wide open to God.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry*, 17.

⁴⁸ Alice Matthews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 95.

As a result of trying to seek God, Matthews points out that there are a variety of silent questions that women ponder. Matthews states that preachers “can do only three things with an idea: explain it, prove it, and apply it.” However, she contends that most preachers only really deal with the first of the three questions, and only recently have begun to deal with the third question. But often, in her opinion, the second question is overlooked. According to Matthews, this is the portion of the sermon presentation that causes the listener to employ their mind, therefore, accomplishing commands listed in Deuteronomy 6:4.

Matthews points out that one of the challenges in any congregation is that the people within those congregations do not all think alike, therefore being successful in causing people to use their mind has to be approached with intention. She points out that epistemology – the study of knowing how people know what they know. The epistemologies of people shape their view of the world, their contributions within it, and more importantly, their individual lives. Matthews stated, “Until fairly recently, women have been omitted from many major studies leading to the formation of psychological theories.”⁴⁹ Studies were done on men, and then if women were considered at all, researchers looked for ways in which women differed from or conformed to male patterns. As a result characteristics traditionally associated with men were valued, studied and articulated things such as the development of autonomy and independence, abstract critical thought, and the development of a morality based on rights and justice. Much less research has focused on the development of more feminine characteristics such as interdependence, intimacy, nurturing, and contextual thought. The study of the feminine characteristics are just as valuable as those studied of men. “Men’s experience

⁴⁹ Matthews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, 104.

served as the baseline, and wherever women differed, they were considered inferior.

Preaching is in one way or another a call to faith”.⁵⁰

“Faith can pose problems for the parishioners who listen to your sermons each week. Some wrestle with the difference between knowing and believing”.⁵¹ Matthews points out that faith presents challenges based on one’s life experiences. Therefore, because men and women have different life experiences, and varied societal ideologies and expectations, the faith that is necessary takes on different forms. “The barriers they (women) must overcome are often fashioned from beliefs that have little to do with biblical truth”.⁵² To address the various epistemologies of women, Matthews suggest that certain questions speak to certain women in certain ways. What Matthews demonstrates is that women and men hear and process differently, and thereby know and believe in different ways to come to faith. “Preaching to women of all epistemologies calls for preaching a faithful vision of God that listeners are able to trust”.⁵³ Not only do men and women have different understandings in faith, but they also have a different understanding of power, leadership, and listening. An understanding of these differences will help the preacher address both, in a manner in which they understand it in order to establish faith in God through Jesus Christ, which is what preaching is designed to do. Gender tendencies and differences are key components in determining how Scripture is both heard and applied.

Over the years, it appears that the importance of preaching has been minimized. Preaching is still the means by which God has chosen to empower his people. In the

⁵⁰ Matthews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, 104.

⁵¹ Matthews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, 105.

⁵² Matthews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, 105.

⁵³ Matthews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, 111.

book, *The Pastor's Guide to Effective Preaching*, Eugene Peterson, in chapter 4, deals with communicating the message effectively. He says "Christians feed on Scripture. Christians don't simply learn or study or use Scripture; we assimilate it, take it into our lives in such a way that it gets metabolized into acts of love, cups of cold water, missions into all the world, healing and evangelism and justice in Jesus' name, hands raised in adoration of the Father. Pastors are given responsibility for preaching these scriptures in such a way that they enter the souls of those who hear, forming lives of repentance and worship and holiness, not just lodging in the brain as information. 'Eat this book,' a phrase in John's Revelation, is both definitive and formative for pastors as we preach."⁵⁴

Preaching on Ethical Issue by Thomas H. Troeger and D.W. Wilbanks deals with the need of the preacher to address ethical issues in preaching. The point is made that if so many issues are present in society, and there is a quest to know right from wrong, then "how will the church respond to this hunger for guidance? And more specifically, how will preachers respond"? The article offers some reasons for the silence on ethical issues ranging from the assumption of the preacher that a position must be taken on the issue, to the preacher's assumption that he or she should be critical of the moral failures of the congregation, to the thought that relationships with the congregation may be damaged, to the preacher's personal struggles with his or her own morale failures. The preacher, the congregation, and the social context are all important areas to consider when preaching on ethical issues. The article acknowledges that the context of the preacher and the life experiences that he or she has, has a great deal to do with what is viewed as an important. "The preacher bears in her or his life story certain particularities of human existence: rural or urban experience, race, class, gender, nationality, age, etc. Each of these

⁵⁴ Eugene Peterson et al., *The Pastor's Guide to Effective Preaching* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill), 48.

characteristics impacts the way we understand life, society, and indeed our understanding of the Gospel itself. Our view of the world, of Christian faith, is not value neutral”.⁵⁵ The context of the congregation involves knowing the moral ethos of the people and the communities. Ethos is defined as knowing the habits, mores, customs, and traits of the people. Because of the variety of characteristics of the congregation, the preacher must know them and view each of them as opportunities rather than constraints. As it pertains to the social context, it deals with the necessity of the preacher to deal with larger issues and then break them down to where they apply to the congregation. Regardless of the challenges to women that the above authors and others have expounded upon, the ability of the preached Word of God to bring a holistic healing and strength is still a reality.

In an article *Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People*, during the modern era, people often tried to understand something by compartmentalizing it into parts or segments for understanding.⁵⁶ Postmodern people, however, process differently. They typically attempt to understand something in terms of its whole. This means that preaching needs to be holistic, and address the whole of the individual – mind, body, soul, and spirit.

“There comes a point, in the explanation of a passage, when the logic of the text begins to catch fire in the hearts of people. When this happens, they begin sensing the implications for their own lives. God begins speaking to them. You can hear the room grow very still. That’s when the expository sermon shifts from explanation in to application. Having walked people into the text, we begin to walk the text into their daily lives”.⁵⁷

As a means of connecting the text with the hearers, the article explains how the

⁵⁵ Thomas H. Troeger and D.W. Wilbanks, “Preaching on Ethical Issues”, *Ex Auditu* Volume 11, 1995, <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=344>, (accessed December 4, 2010).

⁵⁶ “Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People”. <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/postmodernism.htm>. (accessed January 8, 2009).

⁵⁷ “Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People”.

preacher mentions the tough decisions the hearers face, reminds them of moments of anguish, life's weaknesses and struggles, and "they imagine themselves looking their colleague in the eye, or meeting their nemesis in the grocery store. But this time, they have the Word speaking to them".⁵⁸

In this article, Haddon Robinson is noted for saying that people feel "preached at" when the application portion of our message is implemented too soon.⁵⁹ The foundation of the sermon must be presented in a way by which people are given time to understand and come to an agreement regarding its meaning. If there is rejection of the sermon, then there will never be application. Only when there is agreement, does the listener become open to applying it to their lives. If the application comes too soon, it sounds wrong. As a result, sermons to the postmodern listener are not necessarily short. "It takes time to do both explanation and application well. If we short-change the explanation, or relegate the application to the edges, the transformative power of our sermon will become diminished".⁶⁰

Expository preaching, Haddon Robinson's definition, is "the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit applies first to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him or her to the listeners".⁶¹ The preacher must keep in mind that he or she is responsible for presenting the Word of God in truth, thereby ministering to the listener and bringing about change.

In the modernist era, the aim of the sermon was to stimulate and inform the mind

⁵⁸ "Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People".

⁵⁹ "Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People".

⁶⁰ "Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People".

⁶¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 20.

and to capture the attention of the listener, this is why there was a major emphasis on having a strong introduction. In the postmodern era, the purpose of a sermon is to transform a life”.⁶² As a part of transforming a life, preachers should also be aware that many “postmodern people keenly sense the need for community and the necessity to live out discipleship together as a people for God. This is especially true if someone comes from a broken life and needs personal healing”.⁶³ (anon).

In an article, *Preaching Today Sermons: Topical Preaching on Contemporary Issues*, Timothy Warren stated that “expository preaching gives the sermon a ‘Thus says the Lord’ authority; and because it is audience-focused, it provides contemporary relevance. The message of an expository sermon must clearly emerge out of the intended meaning of a biblical passage or passages. Then the meaning must then be applied anew for the immediate audience. Without both biblical authority and contemporary relevance, a sermon, by most definitions, is not expository”.⁶⁴

In the article, *Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview*, George Barna, based on his own research wrote

“We know that within two hours after leaving a church service, the typical individual cannot recall the theme of the sermon they heard. But if they have a discussion about a principle and its application to their life, or if they have a multi-sensory experience with those principles, they retain the information much longer and the probability that they will act on that information rises dramatically”.⁶⁵

He goes on to point out that most preachers would rather focus on teaching a broad message rather than teaching deeply. According to Barna, while teaching broadly may be

⁶²“Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People”.

⁶³ “Postmodern Preaching: Exploring How to Preach Christ to Postmodern People”.

⁶⁴ Timothy Warren, “Preaching Today Sermons: Topical Preaching on Contemporary Issues”, <http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/toponcois.html>. (accessed October 13, 2009).

⁶⁵ George Barna. “Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview”.

emotionally and intellectually appealing, people must have “a mental framework through which they can process the numerous principles, ideas and stories provided in the Bible”.⁶⁶ Since preaching is often an exercise in information overload, Barna states that preachers “have to prepare people to know what to do with the information”.⁶⁷

Eugene Peterson says that Scripture must be internalized by the preacher. As John, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah were instructed to “eat the book”, so to must every preacher that seeks to be true to her or his call, and transform the lives of those they come in contact with, and preach to them.⁶⁸ Ezekiel, in 2:8-3:3, is told to eat the book first, then, he was commanded to go and speak to the people of Israel. In his eating the book, and internalizing it, it became apart of his being. Thereby, even when the people were resistant to what he was said, (because they were resistant to God), his message did not change because it was a part of him. In like manner in Jeremiah 15:16, Jeremiah states that “when your words came, I ate them: they were my joy and my hearts delight, for I bear your name Lord God Almighty”.⁶⁹ He understood the necessity of ingesting the word of God, because he would not be able to appropriately represent God without internalizing His word. It is at this point that the true transformative power of the preached word can connect with the congregation and provide whatever is necessary to be who God desires for them to be, and to overcome the challenges that are faced.

I have found that these same challenges that are cited in the books and articles that we have mentioned, are present in the City of Charlotte North Carolina, and also within the congregation of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte North Carolina.

⁶⁶ George Barna. “Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview”.

⁶⁷ George Barna. “Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview”.

⁶⁸ Peterson, *The Pastor’s Guide to Effective Preaching*, 48.

⁶⁹ Peterson, *The Pastor’s Guide to Effective Preaching*, 49.

In 2008, a Women's Summit convened to reveal the results of a task force that was established in the city. The task force compiled a book, reporting to the city the results of several surveys that were administered over two years. One of the members of the task force is also a member of Second Calvary Baptist Church. *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit 2008 Action Book* reported several areas of concern for women in the Mecklenburg area. The top six concerns that were addressed in the book are: Child and Elder Care, Domestic Violence, Charlotte's Housing Crisis, Political Leadership, Pay Equity/Life Equity, and Healthy Women/Healthy Girls. The results revealed that "Women are listed as the primary caregivers in American society, whether they care for children, elderly parents or other family members. Informal care giving by families and friends is the backbone of the long-term care system".⁷⁰ This fact also affects the careers of the women who are caregivers. It was stated as "limiting or precluding employment; reducing productivity and advancement at work; and creating stressful, unbalanced lives".⁷¹ These were noted as challenges that pertained to most women with dependents, and it had an even greater effect on women of low or moderate income levels. In Mecklenburg County, the demographics of women age 65 years and older is expected to grow dramatically over the next two decades by 85 percent. It notes that the leading edge of the baby boomer is just now hitting traditional retirement age of the early sixties. According to the National Family Care giving Center's report on future trends, women will be the majority among the oldest age groups because men tend to die earlier. According to the report, even though more boys are born than girls, by the time they are in their forties, the number evens out; and when they are in the sixties, women far

⁷⁰ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit 2008 Action Book*. Charlotte, North Carolina. 10.

⁷¹ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit 2008 Action Book*. 12

outnumber men. And of those over the age of 100, 80 percent are women.⁷²

As it pertains to domestic violence, “Domestic violence is widespread, based not only on calls to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) but also on the number of women seeking emergency housing as a result of domestic violence. From 2002 through 2007, domestic calls to 911 exceeded 30,000 each year”.⁷³ Even more alarming is the report from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which estimates that 73 percent of domestic violence assaults go unreported. The task force also reported that information gathered from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, the Women’s Shelter along with Crisis Assistance, indicate that 2 to 3 hundred women and their children are being turned away each year because of the lack of space. In addition, data from 2003 through 2006, indicate 31 county residents died in domestic homicides, 21 women and 10 men. In those cases 23 of the 29 suspects identified in those domestic homicide cases were men; that is nearly seven out of ten.

Another form of violence is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a broader term that refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. IPV is a specific and inclusive definition of intimate relationships involving current or former spouses, boyfriends, or girlfriends, including same-sex relationships. It does not include: relatives (parent, child, sibling, grandparent, in-law, cousin). These acts of violence include: acts of physical aggression – (such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating), psychological abuse – (such as intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating), forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion, and controlling behaviors – (such as isolating a person from their family

⁷² *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book*. 13

⁷³ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book*. 22

and friends, monitoring their movements, and restricting their access to information or assistances). “Each year approximately 1.3 million women are physically assaulted by an intimate partner in the United States”.⁷⁴

Housing is another challenge area for women in Charlotte, North Carolina. In Mecklenburg County, 40 percent of families are considered impoverished. There are two categories for the impoverished: “new” or “old”. Old poverty is based on federal standards of poverty, and the ‘new’ poverty level is based on families whose income is too high to qualify for most government assistance programs but not high enough to meet family needs. This equates to approximately 80,959 families that are in either “old” or “new” poverty levels and more than half of these families (42,609) have dependent children under the age of 18.⁷⁵

In the category of Leadership, the Task Force noted that “Women are usually underrepresented as elected and appointed officials, civic activists, political party representatives and members of influential boards, commissions and study groups.” Likewise, women in leadership in Corporate America is far less than their male counterparts. An additional study by the North Carolina Center for Women in Public Service, a partnership between Peace College and the North Carolina Women’s Forum noted that the value of having women in elected and appointed office is enormous. “Women often bring different concerns to the table than men do, have different approaches to solving problems and provide more responsive constituent service than men”.⁷⁶

In the area of Equal Pay/ Life Quality, many women who work are confronted with two major challenges: 1) on average, they earn less money than men, and 2) they

⁷⁴ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book*. 25.

⁷⁵ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book*. 30.

⁷⁶ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book*. 42

struggle to maintain a balance between work and family. The report showed that jobs that have historically been held by women such as: “teaching, nursing, care giving, retail and other female-dominated fields-have been undervalued and underpaid because of gender...the gender gap in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is dramatic”.⁷⁷ Women, on average, earn 75% of what men earn for the same work. The data further indicates lower percentages for nonwhite women – 64.9 percent for African American, 57.9 percent for Asian and 52.1 percent for Hispanic women. The wage gap is shown to begin when women are first employed and continues through their working life. Other factors contributing to the wage gap are sex discrimination, sexual harassment (causing women to leave or lose jobs), occupational segregation (leading to lower pay in female-dominated jobs), undervaluing female contributions in the workplace and seeing female employees with children as unreliable. “Working mothers also experience job discrimination. MomsRising, a national online political group with over 100,000 members, says mothers are 79 percent less likely to be hired than non-mothers with the same resumes. The group also says that mothers make 73 cents to a man’s dollar (60 cents if you’re single mom), and that women without children make 90 cents to a man’s dollar”.⁷⁸

Depression is listed as a major concern of the Task Force in regards to women. It also notes that depression can put women at risk for suicide. While more men than women die from suicide, women attempt suicide about two to three times as often as men.⁷⁹ Researchers estimate that in the United States in any one-year period, depressive illnesses affect 12 percent of women (more than 12 million women) and nearly 7 percent

⁷⁷ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book.* 43

⁷⁸ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book.* 45

⁷⁹ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book.* 53

of men (more than 6 million men).⁸⁰ These and other challenges face women daily, and they are attending church to learn how to handle and overcome the challenges through the power that is in the Word of God.

Robert L. Thomas has stated: “Very few in the pew have a background sufficient to enable them to comprehend the kind of technical data derived from exegesis. So the minister of the Word must adapt his explanations to suit the vocabulary and interest level of those to whom he speaks”.⁸¹ Therefore, there must be an awareness of the interest, challenges, struggles that are present within the congregation. As noted by Stanley J. Grenz, “the New Testament indicates that the gospel radically altered the position of women, elevating them to a partnership with men unparalleled in first-century society”.⁸²

Ronald J. Allen, in his article, “The Social Function of Language in Preaching”, states “The sermon posits the perspective of the gospel as the basic world view out of which the congregation understands the meaning of life”.⁸³ He goes on to point out that it is the stance that is taken through the sermon that shapes the actions and attitudes of the congregation, amidst the world views that surround them in life. He argues that “the exposition of the gospel through the text presents a world view and results in a social effect”.⁸⁴ One of the main points that Allen brings out is that there are times when the sermon will demand “an overt social program, behavior, or action. At other times, the

⁸⁰ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit 2008 Action Book*. 53

⁸¹ Robert L. Thomas, “The Relationship Between Exegesis and Expository Preaching”. www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj2i.pdf. (accessed August 12, 2010).

⁸² Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo. *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 78

⁸³ Ronald J. Allen. Preaching As A Social Act: Theology and Practice: “The Social Function of Language in Preaching”, Arthur Van Seter, ed. www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1084&c=1110. (accessed December 16, 2008).

⁸⁴ Ronald J. Allen. Preaching As A Social Act: Theology and Practice: “The Social Function of Language in Preaching”, Arthur Van Seter, ed. www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1084&c=1110. (accessed December 16, 2008).

sermon will result in the formation of attitudes that yield social effects”.⁸⁵ If the attitudes of the women who appropriately apply expositional sermons to their lives, it will result in spiritual growth the will thereby lead to changed lives. It is the changed lives, as indicated by Allen, that will yield social effects.

⁸⁵ Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching As A Social Act: Theology and Practice*: “The Social Function of Language in Preaching”, Arthur Van Seter, ed. www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1084&c=1110. (accessed December 16, 2008).

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S SEMINAR CURRICULUM AND SESSIONS

After reviewing what other writers stated regarding the power and impact of expository preaching, I wanted to gather information from the women of Second Calvary between the ages of 26-80 to determine if expository preaching was providing them with spiritual growth. I knew that there were certain challenges that were specific to women, and I wanted to know, from them, what challenges they were dealing with. I wanted to know if age had any bearing on the effects of preaching. In an attempt to obtain the necessary information, it was necessary for me to have a Women's Seminar, create and distribute surveys to obtain empirical data, and incorporate definitions and learning styles to determine if expository preaching had any effects on their lives.

The initial step in this process was for me to collect information from our church roll to determine how many female members we had in our congregation. According to the data received, there are 367 women who are on our church roll, 266 are between the ages of 26 to 80, which comprised 72.4% of our female members. Not only does this data indicate their presence, but it also indicates their financial support, both of which are very important in ministry. After all, Jesus stated that where your heart is, you treasure will be there also. This indicates that not only are women present in church, but they are giving to the ministry because their needs are being met. Since women were over 70% of the congregation, I wanted to know how to reach them better. I wanted to know what issues the women of our congregation were facing at home, at work, and even in the church that perhaps I had not addressed. I wanted to know how they thought preaching would be able to aid them in their spiritual growth as well as their real life circumstances.

I concluded that the best way for me to obtain this information was to ask them and get their feedback.

For two consecutive Sundays, before the benediction, I announced to the congregation that I wanted to meet with all of the women of the church between the ages of 26 to 60 on the last Saturday in August at 10:00 a.m. I assured them that we hoped to be finished before 12:00 noon. I told them that I wanted to meet with them to find out what some of their challenges were in life, church, and their careers. My plan was to give them an informational form to be completed at the meeting as well as to give them an opportunity to voice any areas of challenge that they believed, if addressed, would benefit the women within our church. Once these concerns were voiced and notated, I specifically wanted to know how they felt that preaching could address the voiced concerns. I thought that by using this method, I would be able to obtain both quantitative and qualitative analysis, via short answer responses, from this large, supportive group of my congregation. At the end of the August meeting, I informed them that there would be a Women's Seminar on the last Saturday of September. The Seminar would start at 9:00 a.m. and would conclude at 3:00 p.m.

When I met with the group of women attending the seminar from my congregation who were between the ages of 26 to 80 on the last Saturday of September, I reminded them that I called them together because I wanted to get their input on the impact of expository preaching and if it led to their spiritual growth. I told them that I wanted to preach to the congregation regarding some of the challenges women face in life. I explained to them that 61% of our congregation consisted of women, and it was important for me to address their needs and challenges. I explained that through various

conversations with them, and from our initial survey (survey A), it seemed that many of them were dealing with unresolved challenges of the past, while others were dealing with current challenges – all of which were important. Since they comprised the majority of the congregation, if these challenges were addressed, there would be major spiritual growth within the congregation. Some were dealing with being single parents based on having premarital sex, or divorce, some were dealing with drug addictions, career challenges, and some were dealing with a combination of them. Others were dealing with family struggles, and financial problems. I explained that my awareness of these challenge areas, was based on conversations, observations, and the survey that they had completed in August. Therefore, I asked them if they would be comfortable with completing two surveys regarding the challenges and struggles that they face in life.

I explained that they would not need to put their name on the surveys, but their age was necessary for the analysis of the data. The initial survey, (survey B) was administered at the beginning of the seminar, and it consisted of questions that dealt with the challenges and life experiences that the women had encountered. The second survey, (survey C), which was administered at the conclusion of our meeting, consisted of questions regarding preaching and its impact on them. This survey also asked them to rate themselves regarding their own level of spiritual maturity, and their attitude toward life and its challenges. As stated, these surveys were administered to women between the ages of 26 to 80 to obtain a cross generational perspective of expository preaching and its impact on lives of women. After completing the surveys, those participating were instructed to place the survey in three baskets that were placed by the exit doors. All of the surveys had the same format, the same questions, and were distributed and received in

the same manner. Each survey was divided into multiple sections as a means of obtaining pertinent information by various means. The first survey consisted of four areas which were: Part A = Personal Information, Part B = Personal Challenges, Part C = Methods of Overcoming Challenges, and Part D = Short Written Responses. The second survey consisted of three areas which were: Part A = Bible Passages, Part B = Value of the Preached Word, and Part C = Short Written Responses. Each survey was reviewed to ensure that it was completed correctly, and to gain valuable information regarding their challenges and the effects of expository preaching. (A copy of the surveys are provided in the Appendix)

Upon receipt of the surveys, they were all divided according to the age group indicated at the top of each survey, and according to whether it was survey A or B. The numbers were tabulated and the percentages were recorded and compared. For survey A, one hundred fifty surveys were prepared, but only 121 were given out to ages 26 to 80. Of the 121 surveys that were given out, 98 of them were filled out and given back yielding an 81% return. For ages 26-40 there were 38 surveys completed; ages 41-60 there were 51 surveys completed; and for ages 61-80 there were 9 surveys completed. Some of the participants did not complete the surveys correctly, and some preferred not to do them – primarily because they arrived late. Sixteen of the surveys that were not correct only had their age and whether or not they were a Christian indicated on them – 13 of the 16 were between the ages of 61 – 80. Of the other three, two were in age groups 41-60, and one was in the age group of 26 – 40. There were seven surveys that were not returned. Of the 266 women that are between the ages of 26 to 60, only 121 attended the Saturday meeting, which is approximately 45.4% representation. Both

surveys consisted of quantitative questions and short answer questions.¹ These questions were designed to examine the challenges women experience and how expository preaching provides spiritual growth, and aids them in dealing with their challenge areas. In addition, the short answer questions were designed for me to get a better idea regarding the variety of needs that exist within the women of our congregations.

From the Short Written Responses of Survey B, the top three needs that the women have expressed are in the areas of relationships, support, and encouragement. They have expressed a need for solid relationships within their families, as well as in companionship. One of the women wrote that “she knew that she needed a stronger relationship with Jesus, and that would help all of her other relationships”. For me, Survey B lets me know that some of my preaching could deal specifically with the varied types of relationships that are in the Bible. Perhaps if I even highlighted the good and the bad relationships, then it would provide another reference point for everyone – especially the women.

Another area listed was the need for support of varying types. Some of them include: emotional support, financial support, family support, and in many instances support for them in their careers. This list is an indication to me that there is a small amount of uncertainty and discomfort among some of our women, regardless of positions or stages of life. Therefore, these women have indicated that they need the support of others just to have the courage and strength to keep growing spiritually. This was especially true of the women who are single parents. The need for support can be closely linked with the third need that was expressed, and that is the need of encouragement. For

¹ Copy of informational survey as well as a summary of the responses are provided in appendix 1 and appendix 2.

some the encouragement is needed for them to walk in faith according to the leading of the Lord. For others, it is encouragement to get out of a bad relationship, or living situation. And still for others, it is the encouragement to go further in their career and achieve their goals. In these and other areas of challenge, the Word of God is able to provide strength and cause growth to all who receive it. As indicated by survey A, question 4, 94% of the women surveyed answered “yes” that preaching assists them in handling challenges.

As a means of further expounding on this topic, I then transitioned to the Teaching Curriculum for the Seminar. I provided them with an overview of the Seminar and explained that through expositional preaching all challenges could be addressed, either directly or indirectly, and lead to spiritual growth. Session I was focused on what preaching is, and why it is important to Christians. It was also necessary to examine what teaching is from a biblical perspective because all preaching should involve some form of teaching. A portion of the teaching outline used for Session I is as follows:

Figure 4.1. Teaching Outline of Session I – Women’s Seminar

Session I:	<u>Expository Preaching – Definition and Importance</u>
Goal(s):	To establish a working definition of teaching, preaching, and expository preaching. To explain the origin, purpose and power of preaching.
Outcome:	Class participants will be able to state the definitions of teaching, preaching, and expository preaching. They will also be able to explain the purpose of preaching.
I believe that working definitions are essential for learning and retaining information. If the participant is provided a few definition during each session, it should create a framework for the information taught, and encourage further reflection on the material. Some of the definitions will involve the Greek word for clarity purposes. The words and their working definitions for session I are listed below:	

Figure 4.1. Teaching Outline of Session I (continued)

Teach – {didasko}- to impart information, explain, to teach, be a teacher.

(One who teaches is called {*didaskalos*}. When focusing on that which is taught, as in a doctrine or truth, the word used is {*didache*}. It is always singular when describing a true teaching)¹

Preaching – { *kēryssō* and *euangelízō* } - the oral address in which God instructs, challenges, guides, and imparts His divine will for the lives of people.

(The content of the preaching may be described with the corresponding nouns *krygma* and *euangélion*. Other terms belonging to the same semantic domain include “to speak the word of God,” “exhort,” and “witness”)²

Expository Preaching - the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experiences of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.³

After working through the definitions necessary for the remainder of Session I, the origin and purpose of preaching was necessary to expound upon. The following are examples of the information taught in this portion of the session. I asked for there personal definitions of preaching to begin this session.

Figure 4.2. Teaching Outline for Session I regarding preaching

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness”

2 Timothy 3:16

“God-breathed” – inspiration (*theopneustos*)

Preaching begins with God. It is a method by which He has chosen to communicate with His creation.

To further emphasize the significance of preaching, the definitions from various authors were cited. For example:

¹ W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 1123.

² Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 873.

³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 20.

Figure 4.2. Teaching Outline Session I (continued)

“Preaching is interpreting the significance of the gospel for the situation of the congregation and the world. This theological interpretation takes place through conversations with the Bible, church history and doctrine, contemporary systematic theology, the physical and social sciences, the arts, and especially with members of the congregation.”⁴

After completing Session I, it was then necessary to focus on who is attending church and why. Our overall focus of the seminar is to demonstrate that expository preaching is essential for spiritual growth and affects change in the lives of women of multiple generations. Therefore, it is worth examining the attendance of women in church.

Session II of the Women’s Seminar, involved providing statistical data for both city and national levels, regarding church attendance in America. Although our congregants knew that women were the majority, they were not aware that this was also true at the national level. After looking at the statistics, I wanted some feedback regarding why they thought this was the case. I raised the following discussion question with the seminar participants: Why do women, in spite of their challenges, account for the majority in involvement and attendance at church? The main answers revolved around their faith in God, the strength that they gain through preaching, and their relationship with God. I explained to them that their responses were very similar to a study administered by Frank Newport. His research indicated that:

23% of the women surveyed reported they attend for spiritual growth/guidance, 23% because it keeps them grounded/inspired, 14% because it was their faith, 17% to worship God, 16% for fellowship, 9% because of belief in God, and 10% because of upbringing.

I then gave them some statistical information regarding African Americans and church

⁴ Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 17.

attendance. This information reflected not only how African Americans view religion, but also how that view affects their church attendance.

The Landscape Survey also finds that nearly eight-in-ten African-Americans (79%) say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 56% among all U.S. adults. A large majority (72%) of African-Americans who are unaffiliated with any particular faith way religion plays at least a somewhat important role in their lives; nearly half (45%) of unaffiliated African-Americans say religion is very important in their lives, roughly three times the percentage who says this among the religiously unaffiliated population overall (16%).

In sections B and C of Session II, the exploration of generational needs and values stimulated great discussion. I started this section by simply asking the participants to state at least 3 of their core values. I also asked them why they believed they held the core values that they held. Some of the older women were quiet initially along with the women who were in their late twenties. The Baby Boomers, however, were quick to respond, and the others age groups soon joined the conversation. After a 20 minute discussion on values, I then read portions of an article by Bruce Salmon stating the values and ideology differences among varying generations. An article, *Generation to Generation* by Bruce Salmon noted that older citizens, which he calls “Veterans (ages 67-80)”, have dedication, hard work, conformity, respect for authority, and sacrifice as a few of their core values. He adds that “Baby Boomers (ages 50-67)” value optimism, team orientation, health and wellness, personal gratification, and social involvement. “Generation X (ages 30-50)” has diversity, balance, fun, informality, and global thinking as some of their values, while “Generation Nexters (ages 10-30)” have optimism, civic duty, achievement, morality, and diversity among some of their values.⁵ I explained that because of the power that accompanies the preached Word, and through an expositional

⁵ Bruce Salmon, “Generation to Generation”, (July 11, 2004), <http://villagebapristbowie.org/GENERATIONTOGENERATION>, (accessed August 17, 2010).

delivery of that Word, the ability to reach multiple generations is not unlikely – the statistical data alone proves that case.

An article entitled “Generations”, by Mother Jones, states that “Postmodern leaders walk effortlessly between the secular and religious worlds, talking about the new Radiohead album in one breath, Jesus in the next”.⁶ The emphasis is on the ideology of connecting with individuals, esteeming their value, and allowing them to see one whose identity is not compromised. Expository preaching encompasses the ability to connect, and confirm an individual’s value, both of which are important when meeting the needs of multiple generations.

An awareness of these varying values by preachers will aid them in their delivery of the Word, thereby ministering to more people. Knowing how the congregation thinks, and what they value is critical when determining delivery methods of an expository sermon. Alice Matthews points out that one of the challenges within any congregation is that the people within those congregations do not all think alike, therefore being successful in causing people to use their mind has to be approached with intention. She points out that epistemology – the study of knowing how people know what they know. The epistemologies of people shape their view of the world, their contributions within it, and more importantly, their individual lives.

To address the various epistemologies of women, Matthews suggest that certain questions speak to certain women in certain ways. What Matthews demonstrates is that women and men hear and process differently, and thereby know and believe in different ways to come to faith. “Preaching to women of all epistemologies calls for preaching a

⁶ Linda Leiborich, “Generation: A look inside fundamentalism’s answer to MTV: the postmodern church”, (July, 1998), <http://motherjones.com/politics/1998/07/generation>. (accessed August 17, 2010).

faithful vision of God, that listeners are able to trust”.⁷

At this point, we took time to review the definitions of teaching, preaching, and expository preaching that were provided in Session I, to remind them of the purpose of preaching and how nothing in the definitions limit the impact of preaching by age, degree of challenges, or gender. Many of the women expressed that in some areas of the Bible, they feel devalued, or unimportant. I explained to them that we would attempt to address that issue in Session III. It is important not only for women to find value within themselves, but it is also important that women understand how they are viewed by God, and how He revealed that through Scripture. Through expository preaching, those truths about how God views women, are brought to light, thereby aid in their spiritual growth. The benefits gained from preaching expositional sermons are: clarity on the intent of the writer, clarity on the circumstances surrounding the writing, and clarity in the area of life application.

To further illustrate the benefit of approaching a text from an expositional perspective, I have taken the definition of expository preaching and attempted to apply it as a teaching format for the participants in the seminar. The aim is for them to better understand scripture through expository preaching. If the principles used in expository preaching are applied in teaching, then the awareness of the principles are greater, and the impact of the teaching is heightened.

In Session III, there are fourteen passages from the Bible that address the subject of women in Scripture. I explained to them that we would not be doing an exegesis of all fourteen passages, because time would not allow for it to happen. I informed them that we would examine I Timothy 2:9-15 in detail because 84% of them women surveyed in

⁷ Matthews, *Preaching that Speaks to Women*, 111.

the August meeting, listed this passage as being one in which they strongly disagreed. I explained that as we studied the passage, we would be focusing on the historical, grammatical, and literary styles in an attempt to make the context of the passage clear. When the context is clear, then the meaning of the passage begins to form, thereby aiding in its application. To illustrate this approach of teaching (by applying the definition of expository preaching), I have included a detailed outline of the approach used to teach Session III, section 2A. The outline is as follows:

Figure 4.3. Outline: Historical, Grammatical, and Literary Approach to I Timothy 2: 9-15

II. What Scripture Says and Means Regarding Women

A. Exegesis of Controversial Passages - I Timothy 2: 9-15

1. Historical Factors: Idolatrous Influences/False Teachings – Artemis

For the Ephesian Church, it provided directives that attempted to correct distractions during public worship and create an atmosphere worthy of God. The make-up of the congregation was diverse which presented another challenge for Timothy. It consisted of Anatolians, Greeks, Jews, Romans, and others, all of which brought their cultural practices with them.⁸ Since Ephesus was a major trade center between Italy and the East, the population constantly increased. With this influx of people, many new religions and practices developed. There were some monotheistic Jews as well as polytheistic Jews. Likewise, there was the practice of idolatry, with temples erected that were dedicated to Caesar as well as Artemis. “The people called Caesar ‘god’ and honored him as a god during his lifetime. A statue was dedicated to him in the temple of Quirinus in 45 BC with the words “To the invincible god”. Before his death, he had his own temple under the name Jupiter Julius.

The cult of Artemis was a major problem for Timothy and the early Christian church. They were largely patterned after the Amazon society which was dominated by women.⁹ In their society the women went to war, they worked, and they controlled government

⁸ Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century*. 122.

⁹ Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society, The Prehistoric AEGEAN*, 294.

Figure 4.3. Outline: Historical, Grammatical, and Literary (continued)

while the men were viewed as their subjects.¹⁰ With this type of influence on the cult of Artemis, they were a force to be reckoned within the early church at Ephesus, because they brought these practices and principles into the Ephesian church. Along with the variety of people that made up the congregation within the Church, the false doctrines and teachings of the cultic groups and religions which they came from also entered the church.

Gnosticism was one of the major religions that stood as an opponent to Christian teaching. “Gnosticism has been called a religion of rebellion. Its mythology constitutes an ‘upside-downing’ of the Bible as we know it. The writer of First Timothy called for readers to beware of ‘non-sense’ which sets itself against God, as well as of ‘oppositions of so-called knowledge (gnosis)’ (1 Tim. 6:20). Gnostics claimed that they had special secret knowledge”.¹¹ As a result, Paul wrote Timothy to address these issues.

2. Grammatical Factors: Instructions to Women

v. 9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

“Adorn” when translated to Greek (*kos meo*) adds extra insight for the nature of the times. It means to arrange or put in order. Not only were they to adorn themselves, but they were to do so modestly (*kos mios*) or decently.¹²

He informed them that they were to dress with “shamefacedness and sobriety”.

Shamefacedness (*aidos*) focuses on demeanor in church sobriety (*sophrosune*) addressed the soundness of mind.¹³

Note: *aidos* focused on behavior that is outwardly directed toward others, which offers further information regarding their conduct in public worship. In the same manner he tells them that they must have *sophrosune* of the mind - sound mindedness – which is inwardly focused.

¹⁰ Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society, The Prehistoric AEGEAN*, 294.

¹¹ Kroeger and Kroger, *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 61.

¹² Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 310.

¹³ Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 417.

Figure 4.3. Outline: Historical, Grammatical, and Literary (continued)

v. 10 “Becometh” (*prepo*) signifies being conspicuous among many which should have been an attribute of godly women.

v. 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

The type of learning indicated is believed to be *manthano*, which is to increase one's knowledge. “To be in silence can mean ‘to keep something a secret’.

J. Keir Howard, “silence refers to a stoic virtue of inward peace it refers to a quietness of spirit, a gentleness of nature, and is the exact equivalent of the ‘meek and quiet (*hesuchios*) spirit.”

This type of subjection (*hupotage*) reflects a willful submission.¹⁴

Note: In the case of this verse, women were to willfully submit to learning with a meek and peaceful spirit. For the godly woman this type of subjection would have been self-imposed. However, for the ungodly, non- converted women who infiltrated the church with pagan practices, this command would be repulsive.

“Let the woman learn” was a major statement for many of the male Jews, while “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection” affected many of the new converts from the Amazon background. It is important for the proper context of this statement and these directives to be examined.

v. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach,

suffer or *epitrepo* which many believe equates to “permit”.

Kroeger points out: “*epitrepo*, usually translated ‘I allow or permit’...can also mean to turn to, to give up to, to commit to one’s care, to entrust to, to trust to, to give way to, to suffer, to permit, to refer to, to concede, to agree to, or even to command...”

nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Authentein, means to usurp authority or to dominate

¹⁴ Vine, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers*, 321.

Figure 4.3. Outline: Historical, Grammatical, and Literary (continued)

(which is likely an indirect address toward the Amazon influence in the church)

“usurp” is interesting because it implies leadership by force

“over” implied is proistemi, (which is lito “lead” or “to stand before”),

If the definition is applied that means “to stand before,” it gives a vivid picture of what was possibly taking place during their chaotic worship experiences, thereby causing Paul to render a word of correction.

For example, in understanding 1 Timothy 2: 9-15, a historical understanding is foundational to the passage. Once that is established, the grammatical terminology and structure that Paul used in 1 Timothy provides additional understanding of the meaning and usage of words and phrases. So when Paul said “I suffer not a woman to teach”, the information gathered in study, brings clarity into understanding what Paul meant by that phrase. It therefore, creates the context for the statement, and should minimize the misapplication of teaching of the passage. Nothing in 1 Timothy, overtly mentions the existence of the Amazon influence on society, nor does it specifically mention the cult of Artemis. It is evident from the reading of scripture that there were false teachers and opposition to the Gospel, however, it is only through study of the history, that one becomes aware of the influence of the Amazons, which was a female dominated society. It is only through an understanding of the grammatical and literary study that one can determine that there are alternate meanings of words – especially from that culture.

Paul alludes that these women were so extravagant in their attire, and gaudy in their appearance and a distraction from the worship service.¹⁵

I informed this group of women that all of these categories (historical, grammatical, literary) are essential so that preaching will be in the proper context thereby allowing the application of it to have its full impact upon the listener.

Literary

The prohibition of women teaching altogether is not supported by Scripture. “If we were to understand the use of didaskein as a prohibition against all women instructing men in any manner, we

¹⁵ Frank E. Gaebelin, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 170.

Figure 4.3. Outline: Historical, Grammatical, and Literary (continued)

would find difficulties with other materials in the Pastorals”. First, Titus 2:3 says that older women should be ‘teachers of what is excellent’. While their instruction certainly was to include young women, it was not limited to them. Secondly, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:2, ‘the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful persons who will be able to teach others also’. Here the word for ‘persons’ is *anthropos*, which is used to designate persons of either sex”.¹⁶ Furthermore, if the context of 1 Timothy 2:12 is neutral and refers only to the activity of teaching rather than to its positive or negative content, then it is the only time that *didaskhein* is so used in the Pastorals...we believe that the verb here forbids women to teach a wrong doctrine, just as 1 Timothy 1:3-4 and Titus 1:9-14 also forbid false teaching”.

As I wrapped this section up, I verbally asked them if they had a better understanding of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 based on what was taught in this session. I also verbally asked them if the teaching approach that was used was understandable to them. To each of these questions their verbal response was “yes”. Session III, Section 2A, also has 3 other scripture passages listed that were controversial in regards to their teaching on women and their roles in church and society. I asked for 3 volunteers, and each one of them read one of the 3 listed passages aloud. I explained that the same approach that was used for 1 Timothy 2:9-15, should also be applied for understanding those passages as well. I explained that expositional preaching involves this same approach steps so that the intended message of the Word can be appropriately applied to both genders, and to all generations. After completing the teaching on 1 Timothy 2:9-15, I asked them to take out a sheet of paper and write a paragraph explaining whether their view of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 had changed, why or why not? As a means of further demonstrating how women are viewed in Scripture, I had volunteers read each of the Scripture passages listed in Session III, Section B, which highlights Jesus’ interaction

¹⁶ Kroeger and Kroeger. *I Suffer Not A Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 In Light of Ancient Evidence*, 81.

with women, and Paul's teachings and use of them in his ministry (see Appendix – Item D – Session III, Section B). As we concluded Session III, survey C was distributed to gather feedback on the importance of the Word of God and of preaching.

In Session IV, the focus was on the challenges and needs that women face, and how expository preaching aids in addressing those challenges. For this session, I explained that based on survey A (administered in August), and survey B (administered in Session I (reviewed and charted during the Seminar lunch break), I want to address some of the challenges and needs that are pertinent to women. On survey B, there was a list of challenges for them to rate, according to their degree of experience. If they were dealing with a challenge that was not listed, there was room for them to write it in on the survey. We discussed a general list of challenges that were common to women on a national level. From there, we began to narrow our scope to focus on those challenges that were identified most within African American women within the city of Charlotte. We only focused on the top two needs listed among the challenges because of time constraints. The two areas of challenge that we discussed were: Domestic Violence and Women's Health. Following the discussion on these two areas of challenge, we then explored the needs associated with them, and how expository preaching provides multigenerational spiritual growth. The women in the seminar stated that many women who are burdened with life's challenges are silently suffering within church congregations, and are waiting for something to be said that will provide them with a sense of hope. For example:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit 2008 Action Book reported several areas of concern for women in the Mecklenburg area. The top six concerns that were addressed in the book are: Child and Elder Care, Domestic Violence, Charlotte's Housing Crisis, Political

Within those top six areas, Domestic Abuse was noted as being at an alarming rate:

Figure 4.4. Domestic Abuse Statistics

From 2002 through 2007, domestic calls to 911 exceeded 30,000 each year”.¹⁷ Even more alarming is the report from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which estimates that 73 percent of domestic violence assaults go unreported.

The task force also reported that information gathered from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, the Women’s Shelter along with Crisis Assistance, indicate that 2 to 3 hundred women and their children are being turned away each year because of the lack of space.

Data from 2003 through 2006, indicate 31 county residents died in domestic homicides, 21 women and 10 men. In those cases 23 of the 29 suspects identified in those domestic homicide cases were men; that is nearly seven out of ten.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a broader term that refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. IPV is a specific and inclusive definition of intimate relationships involving current or former spouses, boyfriends, or girlfriends, including same-sex relationships.

These acts of violence include:

- physical aggression – (slapping, hitting, kicking and beating)
- psychological abuse – (intimidation, belittling and humiliating)
- forced intercourse - (and other forms of sexual coercion)
- controlling behaviors – (isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements, and restricting them)

“Each year approximately 1.3 million women are physically assaulted by an intimate partner in the United States”.¹⁸

Discussion followed regarding why people allow themselves to be abused. I noted that men suffer abuse as well, but those instances are not even close to those that

¹⁷ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book.* 22

¹⁸ *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women’s Summit 2008 Action Book.* 25.

women experience. Many times it is because the men do not report abuse, but it is also because, they tend to be the abusers more so than women. Further information from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit revealed:

“Nearly seven out of ten homicide deaths resulting from domestic violence in Mecklenburg County are women. That's based on data from 2003 through 2006, when 31 county residents died in domestic homicides, 21 women and 10 men. The 29 suspects identified in those domestic homicide cases revealed 23 were men and six were women.”¹⁹

I then asked the women why they thought people allowed themselves to be abused. Among the reasons provided were low self-esteem, insecurity, and the need for love. This topic ended with a conversation on how expository preaching is able to heighten self-esteem and create security for the believer. The focus then shifted to Health challenges. Dr. Taffy Anderson notes that:

Figure 4.5. Women's Health Statistics

“76% of Black adults are overweight or obese and approximately 45% are obese...looking strictly at Black women, the statistics are alarming. By gender and race, this demographic is the leading group affected by the obesity problem, with a shocking 81.6% of Black women being overweight or obese and 53.9% suffering from obesity”²⁰

Obesity then serves as a catalyst for other health issues such as:

Type 2 Diabetes

Hypertension

Heart Disease

Health challenges can affect self-esteem and self-concept, thereby creating a possible hindrance to one's outlook on life. The Women's Summit of 2008 noted the following information regarding the health of women and the effect it has on their well being and view of self. The reported noted:

¹⁹. *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Women's Summit 2008 Action Book*. 24

²⁰ Anderson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, “In Pursuit of a Healthy Lifestyle”, 76.

Figure 4.6. Women's Health Report

"Females of all ages have mental health concerns. For example, depression can strike anyone regardless of age, racial and ethnic background, socio-economic status or gender.

Women experience depression at twice the rate of men."

Researchers estimate that in the United States in any one-year period, depressive illnesses affect 12 percent of women (more than 12 million women) and nearly 7 percent of men (more than 6 million men).

"Depression can put women at risk for suicide. While more men than women die from suicide, women attempt suicide about two to three times as often as men."

"Senior citizens commit suicide at higher rates than any other age group. Although they comprise only 12 percent of the U.S. population, people aged 65 years and older accounted for 16 percent of suicide deaths in 2004."

Dr. Anderson says that if more women recognize that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, according to 1 Corinthians 6:19, then it would curtail many health issues, and cause women not to submit to other abuses, such as physical, mental, and emotional abuse.²¹

Many of the participants stated that challenges with health caused them to pray more, read more, and depend on God more. They openly expressed how much preaching has "helped them". They also stated that it seems that God gave them "exactly what they needed at the time that they needed it".

Session V, the final session of the Women's Seminar: **Learning, Listening, Processing, and Participation**, focused on the differences between men and women in the way that they learn, listen, and process information. It also focused on how age effects how women listen and process. William D. Howden, notes contributing factors that influence how an individual hears and responds to sermons are addressed. Howden

²¹ Anderson, *Issues Facing Black Women in America: Our Voices*, "In Pursuit of a Healthy Lifestyle", 77.

wrote:

demographic characteristics influence the response of an individual to a sermon. “Specifically, this study found that older people respond to sermons they hear more positively than do younger sermon hearers and that sermons have greater impact on women than on men”. He states that sex, age, and education are variables that effect sermon responses.²²

Additional study into the differences of men and women are vital when addressing the congregation. Because men and women interact and interpret things very differently, learning how to change your approach when preaching to women will aid in their understanding and provide spiritual growth. For instance, an article, *Bridging the Communication Gap*, noted the differences in how men and women think, speak, and decide. A few of the things noted in the article are:

Figure 4.7. Differences in gender communication

<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
think compartmentally	think globally
tend to mentally separate	cognitively connecting things up,
store information	see how details and information
speak to report facts in short phrases	build up to the bottom line want
and need the “bottom line”	have been taught “hint language”

These differences are vital because when preaching, people could be inadvertently alienated because they hear differently, or process differently. According to Alice Matthews, “not only do men and women have a different understandings in faith, but they also have a different understanding of power, leadership, and listening. An understanding of these differences will help the preacher address both, in a manner in which they understand it in order to establish faith in God through Jesus Christ, which is what preaching is designed to do”. Many times the legitimacy of these differences are

²² Howden, *Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching*, 197.

under-valued. At this point in the session, I introduced the term genderlect.

Figure 4.8. Genderlect

Genderlect – It has the express purpose of taking the communication differences between men and women into consideration, and attempting to eliminate some of the communication barriers.

Term coined by Deborah Tannen that concentrates on the differences in communication styles between men and women, and how at times, it may be necessary to adjust the communication style for the sake of getting the intended point across.

Based on this awareness, I chose to use a variety of teaching methods within this sessions to include as many learning styles as possible. For instance, for many of the older ladies, in the age group of 61 through 80, verbal communication was the most effective way to involve them. Some of the ladies in this group, found it challenging to adequately express themselves through written communication. Some of the younger ladies were not too comfortable in open dialogue, so they enjoyed the written communication better. At times, the ladies were divided into groups within their same age range, and at other times, they were divided into groups of multiple generations. Within the groups that were of the same generation, 92% had shared experiences. Within the multiple generational groups, 82% were at different stages of the same experiences. For example, an older retired lady spoke of having experienced job discrimination when she was employed, while a younger lady (only having been in the corporate work force for 6 years was experiencing job discrimination at that time).

After discussing the differences in learning, listening, and processing, our final conversation in the seminar focused on the participation of women in church and in the ministry in spite of the many challenges discussed throughout the seminar. The stance

that the church makes is vital in how women regard their value. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, in her book *Gender and Grace* examines various areas of women's involvement in the family, society, and the church. I pointed out to the participants that in chapter 12 of her book, Van Leeuwen addresses the male dominance that has been in the church for centuries. Don Williams is quoted as saying, "if redemption is real the warfare between the sexes is over".²³ Van Leeuwen spoke of the "missionary principle" and the "pilgrim principle"

Missionary principle – affirms that for the sake of advancing God's Kingdom in a given time and place, temporary compromises can and often must be made with the societal status quo.

Pilgrim principle – states that no matter what culture or era God's people live in, they are still all in one group called "peculiar people", who will always be at odds with the world around them. I informed the women that not only are women attending church, but they are participating in ministry. Based on Barna research during 1999:

Figure 4.9. Barna research results

14 % of women were involved in discipleship processes compared to men's 7%.
75% of women stated that faith was critical to them, compared to 60% for men.
22% of women participate in Sunday School, compared to 14% of men. ²⁴

The power of the preached Word of God is able to change lives and strengthen individuals. The women participating in the seminar provided both verbal and written testimony of how preaching expositional sermons has helped them make it through rough times. Their constant attendance, participation, and support in the ministry is proof of the ability of expository preaching to provide spiritual growth. Women of varying

²³ Van Leeuwen, *Gender and Grace*, 68.

²⁴ Barna, "Gender Differences".

generations and experiences have collectively stated the value of expository preaching in their lives.

In chapter 1, I wanted to know why women make up the majority of church congregations, in spite of the challenges they experience in life that are specific to their gender. I wanted to know if expository preaching led to spiritual growth of women of multiple generations, regardless of what they encounter. In chapter 2, a theological basis was established to view how scripture addressed the question of preaching and it affects on male and female. Likewise, a theological basis was established on how women were viewed in Scripture. Chapter 3 provided a framework for the topic of expositional preaching reaching women by examining theologians and writer's perspectives on the topic. Having reviewed what Scripture stated, and what other professional have written, I wanted to know how the women of Second Calvary viewed expositional preaching and its effects on their lives. Chapter 4 provides the process used to obtain information, teach information, and gather additional information to determine the value of expository preaching in the lives of women of multiple generations. In chapter 5, I will provide the results of the surveys, the seminar, the preaching series, along with the testimonies of some of the women regarding expositional preaching and its affects upon them.

CHAPTER 5

DATA REVEALED: EXPOSITORY PREACHING AFFECTS CHANGE

It was necessary, after the teaching sessions of the Women's Seminar at our church, to compile the information and determine the effectiveness of the material presented. Although the participants stated how much they learned in the sessions, and how they were helped by the information, I still wanted to obtain empirical data to determine whether expository preaching was able to provide spiritual growth to women of multiple generations at Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte North Carolina, regardless of their challenges. In addition to the Women's Seminar, I also preached a sermon that addressed single parenting, which was one of the challenges listed by some of the women on Survey A.

In the paragraphs that follow, the data received from both the Women's Seminar and the sermons preached intentionally addressing the challenges and fears facing women, will be shown. I personally evaluated the surveys from the seminar because I wanted to ensure the confidentiality of the information they contained. For the sermon evaluations, a leader from the Women's Ministry facilitated that process, because I thought the women would feel freer to provide their feedback. First, I will provide the information received from the surveys followed by an analysis of that information. Secondly, I will explain the process for receiving feedback from the sermons along with a summary of that information.

Quantitative Analysis for the Women's Survey: The Value of Preaching

In review of the surveys that were returned, I decided to evaluate and analyze the same set of questions within each age group to gain additional insight on the sermon's

effectiveness, and the impact it has on women of multiple generations. By analyzing the same questions, it provided me with the opportunity to see if age differences affected the reception and application of expository sermons. Survey C was distributed at the end of Session III of the Women's Seminar. Questions 2-10 were quantitative questions designed to provide feedback on the importance of expositional preaching in the lives of African American women of multiple generations. I have selected 5 of the 9 questions to analyze from section A, and 4 of the 8 questions from section B.

The answers for questions 2-10, in section A, were on a graded scale with 5 possible answers. The scale is as follows: 1 point for strongly agree, 2 points for agree, 3 points for neutral, 4 points for disagree, and 5 points for strongly disagree. The calculations for the average of this section were based on the above mentioned point scale. Some of the raw data from the Value of Preaching Survey: Section A, reflects the following results from the Women of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte North Carolina:

Figure 5.1. Raw data from the Value of Preaching Survey: A

Females 26-40: (31 participants):		
Question 2	24 of 31 strongly agreed that the "preached word" is valuable	(77.4%)
	7 of 31 agreed that the "preached word" is valuable	(22.5%)
Question 3	19 of 31 strongly agreed that the "preached word" does address real-life situations	(61.3%)
	12 of the 31 agreed the "preached word" does address real life situations	(38.7%)
Question 4	26 of 31 strongly agreed that the "preached word" provides strength to face challenges	(83.8%)
	5 of 31 agreed that the "preached word" provides strength to face challenges	(16.2%)
Question 5	25 of 31 strongly agreed the "preached word" encourages them to live better	(80.6%)
	5 of 31 agreed that the "preached word" encourages them to live better	(16.1%)
	1 of 31 was neutral that the "preached word" encourages them to live better	(3.2%)
Question 6	25 of 31 strongly agreed that the sermon kept their attention	(80.6%)
	6 of 31 agreed that the sermon kept their attention	(19.4%)

Figure 5.2. Raw data from the Value of Preaching Survey: A (continued)

Question 7	23 of 31 strongly agreed the “preached word” addresses their needs 8 of 31 agreed the “preached word” addresses their needs	(74.2%) (25.8%)
Question 8	28 of 31 strongly agreed that the “preached word” enabled them to “grow” spiritually 3 of 31 agreed the “preached word” enabled them to “grow” spiritually	(90.3%) (9.6%)
Question 9	27 of 31 strongly agreed they attend church to hear the “preached word” 4 of 31 agreed they attend church to hear the “preached word”.	(87.1%) (12.9%)
Question 10	29 of 31 strongly agreed it was important to be able to apply the “preached word” 2 of 31 agreed it was important to be able to apply the “preached word”	(93.5%) (6.4%)
Females 41-60 (53 participants):		
Question 2	53 of 53 strongly agreed that the “preached word” is valuable	(100%)
Question 3	41 of 53 strongly agreed the “preached word” addresses real-life situations 8 of 53 agreed that the “preached word” addresses real life situations 4 of 53 were neutral regarding the “preached word” addressing real-life situations	(77.4%) (15.1%) (7.5%)
Question 4	44 of 53 strongly agreed that the “preached word” provides strength to face challenges 9 of 53 agreed that the “preached word” provides strength to face challenges	(83%) (16.9%)
Question 5	45 of 53 strongly agreed that the “preached word” encourages them to live better 8 of 53 agreed that the “preached word” encourages them to live better	(84.9%) (15.1%)
Question 6	40 of 53 strongly agreed that the sermon kept their attention 13 of 53 agreed that the sermon kept their attention	(75.5%) (24.5%)
Question 7	43 of 53 strongly agreed the “preached word” addresses their needs 10 of 53 agreed the “preached word” addresses their needs	(81.1%) (18.8%)
Question 8	46 of 53 strongly agreed that the “preached word” enabled them to “grow” spiritually 7 of 53 agreed that the “preached word” enabled them to “grow” spiritually	(86.8%) (13.2%)
Question 9	42 of 53 strongly agreed they attend church to hear the “preached word” 11 of 53 agreed they attend church to hear the “preached word”.	(79.2%) (20.7%)
Question 10	48 of 53 strongly agreed that it was important to be able to apply the “preached word” 5 of 53 agreed that it was important to be able to apply the “preached word”	(90.5%) (9.4%)
Females 61-80 (26 participants):		
Question 2	23 of 26 strongly agreed that the “preached word” is valuable 3 of 26 agreed that the “preached word” is valuable	(88.4%) (11.5%)
Question 3	21 of 26 strongly agreed that the “preached word” addresses real-life situations 5 of 26 agreed that the “preached word” addresses real life situations	(80.7%) (19.2%)

Figure 5.3. Raw data from the Value of Preaching Survey: A (continued)

Question 4	22 of 26 strongly agreed that the “preached word” provides strength to face challenges	(84.6%)
	4 of 26 agreed that the “preached word” provides strength to face challenges	(15.4%)
Question 5	24 of 26 strongly agreed the “preached word” encourages them to live better	(92.3%)
	2 of 26 were neutral that the “preached word” encourages them to live better	(7.7%)
Question 6	18 of 26 strongly agreed that the sermon kept their attention	(69.2%)
	8 of 26 agreed that the sermon kept their attention	(30.7%)
Question 7	20 of 26 strongly agreed the “preached word” addresses their needs	(76.9%)
	6 of 26 agreed the “preached word” addresses their needs	(23.1%)
Question 8	24 of 26 strongly agreed that the “preached word” enabled them to “grow” spiritually	(92.3%)
	2 of 26 agreed that the “preached word” enabled them to “grow” spiritually	(7.7%)
Question 9	21 of 26 strongly agreed they attend church to hear the “preached word”	(80.7%)
	5 of 26 agreed they attend church to hear the “preached word”.	(19.2%)
Question 10	25 of 26 strongly agreed it was important to be able to apply the “preached word”	(96.1%)
	1 of 26 agreed it was important to be able to apply the “preached word”	(3.8%)

The total number of surveys received from Survey C totaled 110. (Since this survey, -Survey C - was administered at the end of session III, it allowed for some of the women who arrived after the administration of survey B to participate). Certain questions were selected from survey C to analyze the value of expository preaching to women of multiple generations. The questions selected were questions: 2,3,4,7, and 8.

For question 2 of section A, the focus was on the value of the preached word to women of multiple generations. For ages 26–40, 77.4 % *strongly agreed* that expository preaching was valuable, while 22.5 % *agreed* that expository preaching was valuable. For ages 41-60, 100% of the women *strongly agreed* that expository preaching was valuable. The women in the age category of 61-80, 88.4 % *strongly agree*, while 11.5% *agree* that expository preaching is valuable. This information aids me in knowing that the preached word is valuable to these women in spite of their challenges.

Question 3 from survey C addresses whether or not expository preaching addresses “real-life” situations. For ages 26-40, 61.3% *strongly agreed*, while 38.7% *agreed*. Ages 41-60, 77.4% *strongly agreed*, 15.1% *agreed*, and 7.5 % were *neutral*. For ages 61-80, 80.7% *strongly agreed*, while 19.2% *agreed*. This data is useful because it implies the relevancy of expository preaching, and how the women find its usability in their life situations.

Another question of great importance to me was question 4. Because it had been confirmed through surveys A and B that there were many challenges that are facing women of multiple generations, I wanted to know if expository preaching provides strength for them to overcome and address those challenges. In 26-40 age group, 83.8% *strongly agreed* that expository preaching provides them strength, while 16.2% *agreed* that it provided them with strength. In ages 41-60, 83% *strongly agreed*, while 16.9% *agreed*. Among the women ages 61-80, 84.6% *strongly agreed*, while 15.4% *agreed*. This information is valuable because it demonstrates a reliance and a usefulness of the Word of God to meet challenges in life. It reflects that women are turning to God in the midst of their challenges as a means of strength and guidance.

Question 7, focused on the needs of women, and whether expository preaching addresses those needs. The 26- 40 age group reflected that expository preaching address these needs with 74.2% *strongly agreeing*, and 25.8% *agreeing*. In the 41-60 age group, 81.1 % *strongly agreed*, while 18.8% *agreed*. For ages 61-80, 76.9% *strongly agreed*, while 23.1% *agreed*. Addressing the needs of women through preaching is in many instances life saving and life giving. It is through addressing the needs of women, and the application of what is preached, that the transformative nature of expository

preaching is manifested.

Spiritual growth is another major component in determining the effectiveness of expository preaching. The best method of measurement is to have the women to evaluate themselves in this area, because only they know their actions and thoughts. Therefore, question 8 focused on whether the women believed that expository preaching enables them to “grow” spiritually. Among women 26-40, 90.3% *strongly agreed*, while 9.6% *agreed* expository preaching enables them to grow spiritually. In ages 41-60, 86.8% *strongly agreed*, while 13.2% *agreed*. Ages 61-80 reflected that 92.3% *strongly agreed*, and 7.7% *agreed*. This information aids in establishing the value of expository preaching in the lives of women of multiple generations in spite of their challenges. This data reflects that expository preaching has the ability to encourage spiritual growth in the lives of women who are applying it, even in the face of their challenges. This data also coincides with the national data presented in chapters 3 and 4 that reflects the attitude of women toward God, religion, and ministry. The data above reflect what the women of Second Calvary have indicated as it pertains to expository preaching and the value that it provides for them. This data does indicate that this is the general belief for all women, or for all congregations, but it is reflective of the value of expository preaching to the women of Second Calvary.

To obtain additional information on whether expository preaching has the ability to affect multiple generations and provide spiritual growth for the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church, it was important to address some of the written responses that were recorded on the surveys. Written responses allow the participants the opportunity to expound upon certain questions in greater detail than the quantitative questions. For

example, the written responses from Survey A were instrumental in designing the Preaching Curriculum and the Teaching Sessions during the Women's Seminar. Therefore, the written responses in section B of survey C are important in accessing the impact of expository preaching of women of multiple generations in the congregation of Second Calvary Baptist Church.

Qualitative Analysis of Women's Survey: The Value of Preaching

The answers in this section were able to provide additional information regarding the effectiveness and the value of expository preaching in the lives of women of multiple generations, and with multiple challenges. Since this is section B of survey C, it has the same number of participants as those of section A of survey C. In this section, I focused on questions 12, 14, 15, and 17. The questions along with a summary of the responses are listed below:

Question 12 - How does expository preaching help you face your challenges?

- "It provides me with strength"
- "It gives me faith and courage"
- "I am determined to press on"
- "I find comfort in God's Word"

Question 14 – How do you know you have "grown spiritually"?

- "How I handle life's situations"
- "My depression is gone"
- "I am more patient in some areas of my life"
- "Lifestyle changes"
- "I don't act the same way I used to"

Question 15 - How has expository preaching aided your "spiritual growth"?

- "Gives me a better understanding"
- "Makes me feel better about myself"
- "I am able to love more"

Question 17 – What role does preaching have in your ability to overcome challenges?

- "Lets me know God loves me"
- "Lets me know God is always there"

“Gives me direction”

The qualitative information allowed me to get an even better idea of what the women thought about the expository sermons and how they processed those sermons. At this point, I was interested in knowing how they would process the sermon I would preach the day following the Women’s Seminar, as well as the sermons I would preach the three consecutive Sundays that followed. Since I would be the person preaching the sermons addressing the challenges of women, I thought it would be better to have one of the leaders from the Women’s ministry collect the feedback information following the sermons on those Sunday mornings.

I met with the ministry volunteer after the Women’s Seminar and informed her that I was interested in getting the feedback from the women on the sermons I was going to preach. I informed her that because it would be handled after morning worship, it should not require more than 30 minutes each week for a total of four weeks. I presented her with a copy of the surveys and asked that they collect them, put them in a folder and bring them to me when they are completed. She was also given the freedom to ask two questions that she thought would be valuable for obtaining verbal feedback, after they were finished completing their surveys. There were 84 women who remained after church to participate and offer feedback after the initial sermon addressing the challenges of women. There were 15 questions on each survey, 7 of the questions evaluated from the surveys were:

- 1) What do you feel the main point of the sermon was?
- 2) Was the sermon topic applicable to female challenges?
- 3) How could the points of the sermon have been presented better?
- 4) Did any sermon points impact you? If so, which ones and why?
- 5) Will the sermon help shape your actions? If so, how?
- 6) Do women really want to lead better lives?

7) Did the sermon provoke you to thoughts about your own actions? If so, how?

A compilation of the information obtained for a total of four weeks revealed that the women were able to list the main preaching points of the sermon, and overwhelmingly believed that the topic was applicable to the challenges facing them. For the sermon pertaining to single mothers, many of them listed that they were impacted because they knew what it was like to be at a point of desperation as a single parent trying to provide for their child. The women stated that they knew that God could do the impossible, even when they did not deserve his goodness. The text for the sermon preached was I Kings 17: 17-24. I used this passage because I thought it addressed a variety of challenges that some of the women of Second Calvary have had to overcome. Five women within our congregation have had to bury their children. Although in the text, the woman's son was brought back to life, the points of the sermon proved to be very helpful to them as well as the other women who heard the sermon. (See sermon outline in Appendix).

A final means of obtaining information regarding the effectiveness of expository preaching on women of multiple generations involves another form of qualitative feedback – testimony. I am extremely glad that I included this part in the meeting because it allowed the women to freely express themselves. One of the women stated that preaching was very important for her because it literally “saved her life”. She went on to say that suicide runs in her family, and that she, after being unemployed for over two years, after having to move out of her apartment, after having to sale her possessions including her car, and after going hungry for at least 2 days out of the week for 7 months, she too, had contemplated suicide. She then indicated that she remembered a sermon that

I preached on God's ability to turn any situation around. She said she went and pulled the cassette tape of that sermon out of one of her bags, and she put it in her cassette player and started listening to the sermon again. She shared that it was that sermon that kept her from committing suicide that night. For her, the preaching reached her at one of the lowest points in her life, and she knows the affects of its power.

The empirical data overwhelmingly indicates the value of expository preaching in the lives of women of multiple generations at Second Calvary Baptist Church. I was slightly surprised with some portions of the feedback provided, particularly in the area of the application of expository preaching to their lives. There was a question on survey C that asked for the areas of life that expository preaching does not apply and the comments were either *not applicable*, or *none*. Although I encouraged them to be honest with all of their feedback and responses, I am aware that there could have been an underlying desire to align themselves with my ideologies for the benefit of the research. While I hope this was minimal, if at all, that possibility must be factored into the analysis.

In conclusion, expository preaching, when properly applied, leads to spiritual growth of women of multiple generations in spite of their challenges for the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte North Carolina. Through expository preaching, the truth of God's Word is made known. Many women have made it known verbally, in written form, and through their lifestyles that expository preaching has impacted their lives. African American women have traditionally placed their faith in God when they had nowhere else to turn. Amanda Johnson wrote, "Things don't always work out the way that we plan, or even with a favorable outcome; but God promises to be our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble".¹ I have learned that the faith

that the African American women who attend Second Calvary Baptist Church is deeply rooted in God, and filters into other areas of their lives. I have developed a greater appreciation for the women of our church, after being made aware of the variety of challenges they have experienced. I have learned that the differences in the way men and women listen, learn, process are major factors in how the sermon is received and applied. Knowledge of these differences has caused me to adjust my delivery style to ensure that it connects with the women of Second Calvary as well as the men. Through expository preaching, the women of our church have experienced transformed lives, changed actions, renewed strength, courage, and a powerful awareness of their value through the eyes of God. Preaching, by the definition provided in chapter 4, is the oral address in which God instructs, challenges, guides, and imparts His divine will for the lives of His people. It is when that definition is applied in an expository manner, that the lives of the women of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina are changed regardless of age, experiences, or challenges.

APPENDIX 1: WOMEN'S SURVEY (A) - INITIAL INFORMATION

As a part of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I am requesting information from you regarding your attitudes, thoughts, and feelings on certain Bible passages, and on expository preaching.

Please do not write your name anywhere on this survey. This survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete in its entirety. You may place the survey in the boxes stationed beside each exit door on your way out. Again, thank you and God bless you.

A. BIBLE PASSAGES

Please read the following Bible passages listed below and indicate your position regarding them.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1	2	3	4	5		
1. 1 Corinthians 11:4-16		1	2	3	4	5
2. 1 Corinthians 14: 34-36		1	2	3	4	5
3. Galatians 3: 26-28		1	2	3	4	5
4. 1 Timothy 2:9-15		1	2	3	4	5

B. ATTITUDES/THOUGHTS/FEELINGS

5. List the challenge areas of your life

6. Why do you attend worship service?

7. What role does the Word of God have in your life?

8. Does preaching assist you in handling the challenges in your life?

9. What does the preached Word of God do for your spirit?
10. What challenges do you face:
- a. on your job?
 - b. at home?
 - c. in parenting?
 - d. in church?
11. How would you rate the effectiveness of God's Word in your life?
12. How do you feel after you have heard a sermon?

APPENDIX 2: WOMEN'S SURVEY (B) - CHALLENGES

As a part of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I am requesting your feedback regarding the challenges women experience in life and what role, if any, expository preaching plays in overcoming those challenges. I also want to know if expository preaching aids in your spiritual growth. Your cooperation in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated.

Please do not write your name anywhere on this survey. This survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete in its entirety. You may place the surveys in the baskets as you exit the sanctuary. Again, thank you and God bless you.

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. What is your age range? (circle one below)
26-40 yrs 41-60 yrs 61-80 yrs Over 81 yrs
2. Are you a Christian? Y/N
3. How many years have you been a Christian? (if applicable)
4. How long have you been a member of Second Calvary Baptist Church?

B. CHALLENGES

For questions 5-14, circle the number that reflects your experience in the listed area.

	No Experience 1	Some Experience 2	Average Experience 3	Strong Experience 4
5. Physical Abuse	1	2	3	4
6. Mental Abuse	1	2	3	4
7. Sexual Abuse	1	2	3	4
8. Spousal Abuse	1	2	3	4
9. Drug Abuse	1	2	3	4
10. Divorce	1	2	3	4
11. Career Discrimination	1	2	3	4
12. Wage Discrimination	1	2	3	4
13. Single Parenting	1	2	3	4
14. Other _____	1	2	3	4

C. METHODS OF OVERCOMING

For questions 15 - 22 Circle the number that reflects your use of that method for overcoming challenges.

	Never 1	Occasionally 2	Constantly 3
15. Professional Counseling	1	2	3
16. Advice from a Friend	1	2	3
17. The Bible	1	2	3
18. A Pastor	1	2	3
19. Prayer	1	2	3
20. Ignored It	1	2	3
21. Family Advice	1	2	3
22. Other _____	1	2	3

D. SHORT WRITTEN RESPONSES

23. What are some of challenges you face, as a woman, in the following areas?

Career:

Relationships:

Family:

Religion:

24. How would you describe your needs?

APPENDIX 3: WOMEN'S SURVEY (C) – THE VALUE OF PREACHING

As a part of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I am requesting your feedback regarding your thoughts and attitudes towards expository preaching. Your cooperation in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated.

Please do not write your name anywhere on this survey. This survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete in its entirety. You may place the surveys in the baskets as you exit the sanctuary. Thank you and God bless you.

1. What is your age range? (circle one below)
26-40 yrs 41-60 yrs 61-80 yrs Over 81 yrs

A. VALUE OF THE PREACHED WORD

Please refer to the scale below to answer the following questions pertaining to the introduction:

Strongly				Strongly
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

2. _____ The preached Word is valuable to me.
3. _____ The preached Word addresses my “real-life” situations.
4. _____ The preached Word provides strength to face everyday challenges.
5. _____ The preached Word encourages me to live a better life.
6. _____ The preached Word keeps my attention.
7. _____ The preached Word addresses “needs” in my life.
8. _____ The preached Word enabled me to “grow” spiritually.
9. _____ I attend church to hear the preached Word.
10. _____ It is important to be able to apply the preached Word.

B. WRITTEN RESPONSES

11. Approximately, at what age did you become a Christian?
12. How does the preached “Word” help you face your challenges?
13. What areas of your life does the preached “Word” not address?

14. How do you know you have “grown spiritually”?
15. Has expository preaching aided your “spiritual growth”? If so, how?
16. Can expository preaching address the needs of the women of our church? If so, how?
17. What role does preaching have in your ability to overcome your challenges?
18. In what ways can sermons better address your life-challenges?

APPENDIX 4: PREACHING CURRICULUM / OVERVIEW

Second Calvary Baptist Church
114 Nelson Ave.
Charlotte, NC. 28216

Rev. Ralph M. McCormick – Instructor

Purpose

The purpose of this course is to teach how expositional preaching can produce growth in women of multiple generations. This course will also identify certain challenges that are specific to women, and how expositional preaching, regardless of the challenges, will lead to changed lives when appropriately applied. An exegesis of certain Bible passages will be taught to provide a scriptural view of women and their value. This course will also develop an awareness of the need to be aware of, and intentionally preach on the challenges of women.

Session I: Expository Preaching – Definition and Importance

Goal(s): To establish a working definition of teaching, preaching, and expository preaching.

To explain the origin, purpose and power of preaching.

Outcome: Class participants will be able to state the definitions of teaching, preaching, and expository preaching. They will also be able to explain the purpose of preaching.

Session II: Women of Multiple Generations Are Attending

Goal(s): To bring an awareness that women (of multiple generations) are the majority group in church attendance and church membership, thereby being major contributors to the ministry and its work.

Outcome: Class participants will be aware of women's presence in ministry and worship. They will be able to identify three areas of challenge confronting women, and how preaching can address those challenges.

Session III: Women in Scripture

Goal: To examine how women are viewed in Scripture according to what is written, as well as their roles and functions within the Bible.

Outcome: Participants will be able to reference two passages of Scripture and use them to explain the value of women and their contributions during the biblical times in which they lived.

Session IV: Women, Challenges, Needs, and the Word

Goal: To bring awareness to the many challenges that women are dealing with in the congregations, and the value of expositional preaching in addressing them.

Outcome: Participants will be able to list 5 challenges specific to women. They will also be able to explain why expository preaching can provide strength and growth during those challenges.

Session V: Learning, Listening, Processing, and Participation

Goal: To provide information regarding the difference in the way men and women learn, listen, and process.

Outcome: Participants will be able to explain why know the differences in learning, listening, and processing is important when preaching expositional sermons

APPENDIX 5: TEACHING OUTLINE

Session I: Expository Preaching – Definition and Importance

Goal(s): To establish a working definition of teaching, preaching, and expository preaching.

To explain the origin, purpose and power of preaching.

Outcome: Class participants will be able to state the definitions of teaching, preaching, and expository preaching. They will also be able to explain the purpose of preaching.

I. Introduction/Greeting/Course Overview

II. Establishing Working Definitions:

(State that working definitions will be given during in each session, and that at the conclusion of the course, there will be a total of _____ which they will be responsible for knowing and explaining.)

I believe that working definitions are essential for learning and retaining information. If the participant is provided a few definition during each session, it should create a framework for the information taught, and encourage further reflection on the material. Some of the definitions will involve the Greek word for clarity purposes. The words and their working definitions for session I are listed below:

Teach – {didasko}- to impart information, explain, to teach, be a teacher.

(One who teaches is called {didaskalos}. When focusing on that which is taught, as in a doctrine or truth, the word used is {didache}. It is always singular when describing a true teaching)

Preaching – { *kēryssō* and *euangel' zō* } - the oral address in which God instructs, challenges, guides, and imparts His divine will for the lives of people.

(The content of the preaching may be described with the corresponding nouns *k rygma* and *euangelion*. Other terms belonging to the same semantic domain include “to speak the word of God,” “exhort,” and “witness.”)

Expository Preaching - the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experiences of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers

III. Origin of Preaching

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)

“God-breathed” – inspiration (theopneustos)

IV. Purpose of Preaching

In general, preaching is the communication of a religious message to a group of people. True Christian preaching interprets the meaning of God’s acts into contemporary contexts.

For the contemporary preacher, she or he must know the demographics of the congregation, as well as the life experiences within the congregation.

A sermon becomes God’s word to us only as God’s servant reconstitutes the past realities of the biblical revelation into vital present experience.

V. Why Preaching Has Power

Ray Stedman in his article: *The Primacy of Preaching*, Stedman stated that “much of the present weakness in preaching is due to the failure of preachers to understand the uniqueness of what they are to preach, and its remarkable power to change a congregation, a community, a city, or even a nation”.

In 1 Corinthians 2:7, Paul states that the preacher is to preach the wisdom of God, a hidden mystery that will be for our glory. Stedman points out that glory means to “manifest the hidden values within”.

“And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

- 1 Corinthians 2:13 (ESV)

“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

- 2 Peter 1:21 (ESV)

-

VI. Various Views on Preaching

“Expository sermons are those which derive their content from Scripture itself. They borrow their structure and thrust from a specific passage. They make the

same point that the passage makes, and apply that point with directness and urgency to contemporary life”.

The Primacy of Preaching by Ray C. Stedman

Preaching is interpreting the significance of the gospel for the situation of the congregation and the world. This theological interpretation takes place through conversations with the Bible, church history and doctrine, contemporary systematic theology, the physical and social sciences, the arts, and especially with members of the congregation.”

Preaching and Practical Ministry by Ronald J. Allen

“Preaching has its deepest effect in a congregation when it draws its breath in positive connection with other things that happen in the Christian community.”

Preaching and Practical Ministry by Ronald J. Allen

Session II: Women of Multiple Generations Are Attending

Goal(s): To bring an awareness that women (of multiple generations) are the majority group in church attendance and church membership, thereby being major contributors to the ministry and its work.

Outcome: Class participants will be aware of women's presence in ministry and worship. They will be able to identify three areas of challenge confronting women, and how preaching can address those challenges.

A. Statistical Data

Frank Newport, *Just Why Do Americans Attend Church?*, it is noted that "women of all ages are more likely than men to attend church. There are region-specific effects, with residents of Southern states and of Utah much more likely to attend than New England or West coast residents. There is a race effect, with Black Americans much more likely to attend church services on average than White Americans".

A survey of 562 church attendees was given, and some of the results are as follows: 23% attend for growth and guidance, 20% stated that it kept them "grounded/inspired", 15% stated it was for faith purposes, 15% stated it was to worship God, 12% stated it was because they believed in God, and 2% stated it was because of their upbringing. Some of the people gave multiple reasons for attending church.

23% of the women surveyed reported they attend for spiritual growth/guidance, 23% because it keeps them grounded/inspired, 14% because it was their faith, 17% to worship God, 16% for fellowship, 9% because of belief in God, and 10% because of upbringing.

B. Generational Needs

One valuable truth that comes from the survey is that the majority of the people who attend church are seeking something from someone greater than themselves – God.

The context of the congregation involves knowing the moral ethos of the people and the communities. Ethos is defined as knowing the habits, mores, customs, and traits of the people. Because of the variety of characteristics of the congregation, the preacher must know them and view each of them as opportunities rather than constraints.

C. Generational Theology Views

Dr. Elaine Flake, in her book *God in Her Midst*, examines her theological evolution into what she calls a “womanist theology”. According to Flake, “a womanist perspective on preaching maintains that if the preached word is to serve its salvific and liberating purposes for all people, African American women’s experiences and perspectives must be acknowledged and included”.

The intent of the womanist theology however, is not only to bring an awareness to the challenges facing women, but to suggest practical methods of addressing them, for the healing of women.

Feminist theology

D. Discussion Questions

Session III: Women in Scripture

Goal: To examine how women are viewed in Scripture according to what is written, as well as their roles and functions within the Bible.

Outcome: Participants will be able to reference two passages of Scripture and use them to explain the value of women and their contributions during the biblical times in which they lived.

I. Opening Questions

A. Discussion Question: What woman in the Bible most inspires you and why?

B. Discussion Question: How does Scripture depict women and their roles in society and ministry?

II. What Scripture Says and Means Regarding Women

A. Exegesis of I Timothy 2: 9-15

1. Historical Factors: Idolatrous Influences/False Teachings – Artemis

For the Ephesian Church, it provided directives that attempted to correct distractions during public worship and create an atmosphere worthy of God. The make-up of the congregation was diverse which presented another challenge for Timothy. It consisted of Anatolians, Greeks, Jews, Romans, and others, all of which brought their cultural practices with them.¹ Since Ephesus was a major trade center between Italy and the East, the population constantly increased. With this influx of people, many new religions and practices developed. There were some monotheistic Jews as well as polytheistic Jews. Likewise, there was the practice of idolatry, with temples erected that were dedicated to Caesar as well as Artemis. "The people called Caesar 'god' and honored him as a god during his lifetime. A statue was dedicated to him in the temple of Quirinus in 45 BC with the words "To the invincible god". Before his death, he had his own temple under the name Jupiter Julius.

The cult of Artemis was a major problem for Timothy and the early Christian church. They were largely patterned after the Amazon

¹ Sharon Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus*: 122.

society which was dominated by women.² In their society the women went to war, they worked, and they controlled government while the men were viewed as their subjects.³ With this type of influence on the cult of Artemis, they were a force to be reckoned within the early church at Ephesus, because they brought these practices and principles into the Ephesian church. Along with the variety of people that made up the congregation within the Church, the false doctrines and teachings of the cultic groups and religions which they came from also entered the church.

Gnosticism was one of the major religions that stood as an opponent to Christian teaching. "Gnosticism has been called a religion of rebellion. Its mythology constitutes an 'upside-downing' of the Bible as we know it. The writer of First Timothy called for readers to beware of 'non-sense' which sets itself against God, as well as of 'oppositions of so-called knowledge (gnosis)' (1 Tim. 6:20)"...Gnostics claimed that they had special secret knowledge".⁴ As a result, Paul wrote Timothy to address these issues.

2. Grammatical Factors: Instructions to Women

v. 9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

"Adorn" when translated to Greek (*kos meo*) adds extra insight for the nature of the times. It means to arrange or put in order. Not only were they to adorn themselves, but they were to do so modestly (*kos mios*) or decently.⁵

He informed them that they were to dress with "shamefacedness and sobriety".

Shamefacedness (*aidos*) focuses on demeanor in church sobriety (*sophrosune*) addressed the soundness of mind.⁶

Note: *aidos* focused on behavior that is outwardly directed toward others, which offers further information regarding their conduct in public worship. In the same manner he tells them that they must have

² George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, 294.

³ George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, 294.

⁴ Kroeger and Kroeger. 61

⁵ W.E. Vine, A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meaning for English Readers (McLean: MacDonald Publishing Co., 1979), 310

⁶ Vine, 417.

sophrosune of the mind - sound mindedness – which is inwardly focused.

v. 10 “Becometh” (prepo) signifies being conspicuous among many which should have been an attribute of godly women.

v. 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

The type of learning indicated is believed to be *manthano*, which is to increase one's knowledge. “To be in silence can mean ‘to keep something a secret’.

J. Keir Howard, “silence refers to a stoic virtue of inward peace it refers to a quietness of spirit, a gentleness of nature, and is the exact equivalent of the ‘meek and quiet (*hesuchios*) spirit.”

This type of subjection (*hupotage*) reflects a willful submission.⁷

Note: In the case of this verse, women were to willfully submit to learning with a meek and peaceful spirit. For the godly woman this type of subjection would have been self-imposed. However, for the ungodly, non- converted women who infiltrated the church with pagan practices, this command would be repulsive.

“Let the woman learn” was a major statement for many of the male Jews, while “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection” affected many of the new converts from the Amazon background. It is important for the proper context of this statement and these directives to be examined.

v. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach,

suffer or *epitrepo* which many believe equates to “permit”.

Kroeger points out: “*epitrepo*, usually translated ‘I allow or permit’ ...can also mean to turn to, to give up to, to commit to one’s care, to entrust to, to trust to, to give way to, to suffer, to permit, to refer to, to concede, to agree to, or even to command...”

nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Authentein, means to usurp authority or to dominate

⁷ Vine, 321.

(which is likely an indirect address toward the Amazon influence in the church)

“usurp” is interesting because it implies leadership by force

“over” implied is proistemi, (which is lito “lead” or “to stand before”),

If the definition is applied that means “to stand before,” it gives a vivid picture of what was possibly taking place during their chaotic worship experiences, thereby causing Paul to render a word of correction.

For example, in understanding 1 Timothy 2: 9-15, a historical understanding is foundational to the passage. Once that is established, the grammatical terminology and structure that Paul used in 1 Timothy provides additional understanding of the meaning and usage of words and phrases. So when Paul said “I suffer not a woman to teach”, the information gathered in study, brings clarity into understanding what Paul meant by that phrase. It therefore, creates the context for the statement, and should minimize the misapplication of teaching of the passage.

Nothing in 1 Timothy, overtly mentions the existence of the Amazon influence on society, nor does it specifically mention the cult of Artemis. It is evident from the reading of scripture that there were false teachers and opposition to the Gospel, however, it is only through study of the history, that one becomes aware of the influence of the Amazons, which as a female dominated society. It is only through an understanding of the grammatical and literary study that one can determine that there are alternate meanings of words – especially from that culture.

Paul alludes that these women were so extravagant in their attire, and gaudy in their appearance and a distraction from the worship service.⁸

I informed this group of women that all of these categories (historical,

grammatical, literary) are essential so that preaching will be in the proper context

thereby allowing the application of it to have its full impact upon the listener.

⁸ Frank E. Gaebelin, The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 170.

Literary

The prohibition of women teaching altogether is not supported by Scripture. "If we were to understand the use of *didaskein* as a prohibition against all women instructing men in any manner, we would find difficulties with other materials in the Pastorals". First, Titus 2:3 says that older women should be 'teachers of what is excellent'. While their instruction certainly was to include young women. Secondly, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:2, 'the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful persons who will be able to teach others also'. Here the word for 'persons' is *anthropos*, which is used to designate persons of either sex".⁹ Furthermore, if the context of 1 Timothy 2:12 is neutral and refers only to the activity of teaching rather than to its positive or negative content, then it is the only time that *didaskein* is so used in the Pastorals...we believe that the verb here forbids women to teach a wrong doctrine, just as 1 Timothy 1:3-4 and Titus 1:9-14 also forbid false teaching".

B. Other Controversial Passages

1. I Corinthians 11: 4-16
2. I Corinthians 14: 34-36
3. Galatians 3: 26-28

The verses in Galatians focus on the equality of value of all who are in Christ Jesus. It cannot be misconstrued and used to support an elimination of role distinctions or functions. All persons in Christ have the same value, but not the same function in the Body of Christ. Therefore, just as this verse cannot be used for argument of order and function, it can be used as an argument for value. As stated, both men and women have the same value in Christ, so women cannot be devalued by any scriptural arguments.

The prohibition of women teaching altogether is not supported by Scripture. "If we were to understand the use of *didaskein* as a prohibition against all women instructing men in any manner, we would find difficulties with other materials in the Pastorals".

As stated, Kroeger has an alternative interpretation of the meaning of verse 11 and believes "In the pastoral Epistles, *didaskein* is used in contexts which express or imply the content of the teaching whether the word is used of the false doctrines which the

⁹ Kroeger and Kroeger. 81

opponents promulgated or of instruction in the truth”, the issue is what is taught, not who is teaching it.

B. Jesus and Paul on Women

1. Jesus on Women

- a. John 4: 7-30 (Woman at the Well)
- b. John 8: 1-11 (Jesus’ Response to Woman Caught in Adultery)
- c. Luke 8:1-3 (Women as Supporters)
- d. Matthew 15: 21-28 (Woman’s Faith is Great)
- e. Mark 14: 3-9 (Anointed by the Woman)

2. Paul on Women

- a. Romans 16:3 (Phoebe as Minister)
- b. Romans 16: 7 (Junia – female name)
- c. I Corinthians 16: 19-20 (Priscilla and Aquila)
- d. Philippians 4: 2-3 (Euodia and Syntyche – Evangelist)
- e. Philemon v.2 (Apphia – house church leader)

III. How These Scriptural Truths Impact Expository Preaching

A. Provides Awareness of God’s View of Women

B. God Becomes the Source of Strength

“The Bible speaks of man and woman as being equally commissioned to have dominion over the earth and to fill it (Gen. 1:26-28) and as being equally made in God’s image:”When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God. It would perhaps be more just to postulate that Paul, when he speaks of Adam, has in mind both male and female, as does the writer of Genesis 5:1-2. Here ‘Adam’ is a generic name for humankind, as it is in Genesis 1:27-28”.¹⁰ Male and female he created them, and he

¹⁰ Kroeger and Kroeger. 20

blessed them and named them 'humankind' [literally, Adam-hear used generically] when they were created"(Gen. 5:1-2).¹¹

IV. Administer Survey C

¹¹ Kroeger and Kroger. 18

Session IV: Women, Challenges, Needs, and the Word

Goal: To bring awareness to the many challenges that women are dealing with in the congregations, and the value of expositional preaching in addressing them.

Outcome: Participants will be able to list 5 challenges specific to women. They will also be able to explain why expository preaching can provide strength and growth during those challenges.

I. Some stated Challenges Women Encounter

A. Administer Survey Dealing with Challenges Women Have Encountered

B. Discuss the challenges listed below, (along with others), and their affect women

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Drug Abuse

Career Discrimination

Single Parenting

Health

Mental Abuse

Spousal Abuse

Divorce

Wage Discrimination

Low Self-Esteem

Some of the challenges that face African-American women are addressed in Dr. Elaine Flake's book, *God in Her Midst* her writing, with the main one involving abuse – physical, sexual, and emotional.

African American women have endured numerous forms of oppression, including poverty and abandonment, perhaps the most ubiquitous form of oppression has resulted from our experience as victims of physical and sexual abuse".¹²

Stanford Report entitled Women Continue to Face Challenges, Despite Progress Since 1970s, Nannerl Keohane, cites the following challenges:

1. the extent to which women hold authority or positions of leadership;
2. the degree of flexibility in household and domestic arrangements;
3. Good provisions for the care of children;
4. Control over sexual and reproductive choices;
5. Reduction in sexual harassment;
6. Access to education;
7. Chances for meaningful work, equal pay and promotion;

¹² Elaine Flake, *God in Her Midst*. 2

8. The degree to which cultural depictions of women acknowledge their personhood rather than dwelling solely on female sexuality.

Dr. Taffy Anderson, a medical doctor, deals with the many health challenges that women face. According to Anderson, “76% of Black adults are overweight or obese and approximately 45% are obese...looking strictly at Black women, the statistics are alarming. By gender and race, this demographic is the leading group affected by the obesity problem, with a shocking 81.6% of Black women being overweight or obese and 53.9% suffering from obesity”

Obesity serves as a catalyst for other health issues such as: Type 2 Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Disease, Stroke, Osteoarthritis, Cancer.¹³

II. Methods of Overcoming Those Challenges

As we further examine how valuable the preached word is to women of multiple generations, it is important to point out that many of their experiences are shared. There are some aspects of our society that discriminate according to gender – whether intentional or subtly imbedded in precepts, actions, or attitudes. Although there are varying degrees of discrimination, its overall effect is still a hindrance to and for women.

Yolanda Powell, addresses the importance of knowing and aligning with the will of God. Powell states:

“Black Christian women have traditionally overcome obstacles and troubling circumstances by remaining faithful to the spiritual anchors of our faith that are grounded in Jesus Christ”.

Powell suggests that there are at least four timeless elements that secure the lives of black women- which she refers to as their anchor. The four elements are:

- 1) Saving faith in Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Deliverer;
- 2) Uncompromising belief in God’s Holy Word;
- 3) Prayers uttered with an unshakable trust;
- 4) Worship and singing aloud songs, hymns, and spiritual songs”.¹⁴

A. Professional Help

1. Licensed Christian Counselor
2. Psychologist

¹³ Amanda Johnson. Our Voices. Taffy Anderson. 76

¹⁴ Amanda Johnson. Our Voices. Yolanda Powell 14

- 3. Physician
- 4. Law Enforcement

B. Agencies and Safe Houses

C. Support of Friends and Family

D. The Bible/Pastor

III. Provide Scripture that Strengthens and Encourages Women

- A. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- B. Galatians 3:28:
- C. 1 Peter 4:10-11
- D. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7
- E. Acts 2:1-21
- F. John 1:12

Session V: Learning, Listening, Processing, and Participation

Goal: To provide information regarding the difference in the way men and women learn, listen, and process.

Outcome: Participants will be able to explain why know the differences in learning, listening, and processing is important when preaching expositional sermons

I. Differences in Learning

While created in the image of God with equality of worth and value, men and women are different by design and function. Gender differences are apparent physically and behaviorally but, rarely do we consider the differences in learning, listening, and processing. Men and women are different in the way they think, feel, act, and talk.

II. Differences in Listening

William D. Howden, *Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching*, the factors that influence how an individual hears and responds to sermons are addressed.¹⁵ Howden wrote that demographic characteristics influence the response of an individual to a sermon. "Specifically, this study found that older people respond to sermons they hear more positively than do younger sermon hearers and that sermons have greater impact on women than on men". He states that sex, age, and education are variables that effect sermon responses.

III. Differences in Processing

"Women tend to use more words to communicate their thoughts, experiences, ideas, history, and emotions than men do. Men tend to narrow their focus down to one thing at a time while women tend to be big picture communicators. Men prefer to say on task when communicating while women prefer to make sure they communicate all the various threads that connect to the point or points they want to make".

There are some general differences in communication and listening methods that do not hinge upon whether a person is Christian or non-Christian, churchd or unchurchd. Kelley states that "men and women have unique ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings...the church , as a body of believers, male and female, is challenged by these differnces

¹⁵ William D. Howden. *Good Sermon, Preacher: The Effects of Age, Sex, and Education on Hearer Response to Preaching*.

in communicative style. The impact of these gender differences is experienced in informal conversations, Bible study classes, church committee meetings, counseling sessions, and pulpit preaching”¹⁶

Genderlect – It has the express purpose of taking the communication differences between men and women into consideration, and attempting to eliminate some of the communication barriers.

Term coined by Deborah Tannen that concentrates on the differences in communication styles between men and women, and how at times, it may be necessary to adjust the communication style for the sake of getting the intended point across.

Bridging the Communication Gap, noted the differences in how men and women think, speak, and decide.

Men

think compartmentally
tend to mentally separate
store information
speak to report facts in short phrases
line want and need the “bottom line”

Women

think globally
cognitively connecting things up,
see how details and information
need to build up to the bottom
have been taught “hint language”

IV. How These Difference Impact Listeners

V. Women’s Participation in Minisry

¹⁶ Rhonda H. Kelly. *Communication between Men and Women in the Context of the Christian Community*.

Working Definitions

Teaching - to impart information, explain, to teach, be a teacher.

Preaching - the oral address in which God instructs, challenges, guides, and imparts His divine will for the lives of people.

Expository Preaching - the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experiences of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers

Exegesis - a critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially a religious text. Traditionally the term was used primarily for exegesis of the Bible; however, in contemporary usage it has broadened to mean a critical explanation of any text, and the term "Biblical exegesis" is used for greater specificity. The goal of Biblical exegesis is to explore the meaning of the text which then leads to discovering its significance or relevance.

Genderlect - Deborah Tannen coined the term 'Genderlect' to describe the way that the conversation of men and women are not right and wrong, superior and inferior -- they are just different.

(A useful way of viewing this that she uses is that they are as different cultures. Thus, as a Japanese and French person conversing would take account of each others different cultural styles, so also should men and women understand and take account of the very real differences of the other).

Womanist Theology - a religious conceptual framework which reconsiders and revises the traditions, practices, scriptures, and biblical interpretation with a special lens to empower and liberate African-American women in America. Womanist theology associates with and departs from Feminist theology and Black theology specifically because it integrates the perspectives and experiences of African American and other women of color.

Feminist Theology - a movement found in several religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and New Thought, to reconsider the traditions, practices, scriptures, and theologies of those religions from a feminist perspective. Some of the goals of feminist theology include increasing the role of women among the clergy and religious authorities, reinterpreting male-dominated imagery and language about God, determining women's place in relation to career and motherhood, and studying images of women in the religion's sacred texts and matriarchal religion.

APPENDIX 6: SERMON OUTLINE: I KINGS 17: 17-24

Text: I Kings 17: 17-24
Genre: Narrative
Subject: What will God do reveal himself to us?
Complement: He will do for us what we can not do for our selves.
Title: Now I Understand

Date Preached September 26, 2010

I. Introduction.

As we continue our journey through 1 Kings chapter 17, we find yet another occurrence of God using a less than desirable circumstance to prove that he is in control. On this occasion, we are told that Elijah is not directly effected by this move of God, but he plays a vital role in establishing the ultimate purpose of God. There has been some question as to whether this story involves the same woman that is discussed in the previous verses, or if this is a different woman, however, all indicators are that this is the same woman, but even if it were not, the meaning and point of the passage would not change.

The setting of this story is the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. It was a town on the Mediterranean coast of Phoenicia between Tyre and Sidon. This area was also known for its worship of Baal. It was in the plan of God to send Elijah to this village, and have him fed by a widow woman. This is unique because during the time of famine, the poor (including the widows) were often the first effected by the conditions of the famine.

Verse 17 starts out with “after these things” or “some time later” or “and it came to pass”. Now on the surface this phrase connects what is to follow with what preceded it. And for our purposes, what the Lord has had us to focus on is “What Happens When You Take God at His Word” and how to deal with “A Rough Situation That Only God Can Handle”. Therefore, we are witnessing another story so that when it is all said and done we can leave with the testimony of “Now I Know”. And for some woman who is here today, that one phrase can bring both comfort and caution. The comfort comes from the key words, “after”, “later”, or “came to pass” (depending on the translation). And for you, the comfort is in knowing that what you are in right now will not consume you, it will not destroy you, it will not over take you, because the text says “after”, “later”, or “pass”. And what that means is that it may be rough right now, but there is an “after” that is on the way, there is a “later” that is down the road, there is a “pass” that has your situation stamped on it. So, you can rejoice and be glad at the fact that your difficult situation now, will soon work out for your good – and that is good news, because for someone – the situation looks extremely dark right now.

The caution, however, is that sometime down the road, there is something else that is on the way. There is another challenge that is in the future, there is another circumstance on the horizon. Yes, my brothers and my sisters, there is something else on the way. But, don’t be afraid, and do not worry, because whenever it comes up, where ever it comes up, and however it comes up, there will be someone, or something given to

you from God that will help you through – so you will have the testimony of “Now I Know”. That’s what Elijah’s role was in this text – help the woman through her situation and reveal the truth of God. Now, I know what you are saying, if you are like me, you are saying to yourself “self”- “the last thing I need is another problem, the last thing I need is another uproar, the last thing I need is another challenge, the last thing I need is another difficult storm”. For some mother, you are saying to yourself that it is difficult enough trying to provide for your child, and the last thing you need is another struggle, challenge, or set back. And is there anyone here that will admit that you are tired of storms, stuff, and situations. And the question becomes, how do I get to the point where I know what God can do. Well, let’s look at the text. This is the story of a woman who had done the things that she thought were right, and honorable. Now, she is having to face what could possibly be her worst nightmare. She is a widow woman, and her future means of support lies within her son, and all of a sudden, tragedy strikes her out of nowhere.

I. We will find out what God is able to do when we turn Your Situation Over To God

- A. The Bible says that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick.
- B. And as a result of him becoming sick, she addresses Elijah and asked him if he showed up on the scene just to remind her of her past sins and to kill her son.
- C. Remember, this is the woman that got Elijah some water when she did not even know him. This is the woman that agreed to bake him some bread and feed him. This is the woman that not only agreed to get him water and to feed him, but this is the woman that agreed to feed him first. And the Bible says that the Word of the Lord that was spoken by Elijah came true, and the flour and oil did not run out.
- D. Therefore, you would think that this would mean that problems would not be in this house, because the man of God was there, and she helped the man of God in his time of need. Therefore, you would think that if anyone was going to be blessed and problem free, it would be this woman, but the text let’s us know that this was not the case. The fact was, that this woman had a son that was so sick, according to the text, that there was no breath left in him”.
- E. Now have you ever been in that condition, that the circumstance you were experiencing was so bad, that you felt like you did not have any “breath” left in you. Is there a woman here who has faced so many challenges that you did not think you had the strength to continue? You felt like you did not have any “fight” left in you. You felt like you did not have any “strength” left in you. Yes, it looked like death was on the way. And for this woman, her husband was already dead, and now it looked like her only son was dead also. And for somebody here today, it looked like that things were already bad, but then something else has happened and now it looks extremely bad.

- F. She looks at Elijah and says in contemporary language, “What have I done to you, to cause this to happen to me”.
- G. Elijah’s response was “give me your son.” And for the woman, if she wanted the situation with her son to change, she had to let him go and give her son (her situation) over to God – by giving him to Elijah. She had the hard task of letting her son go, and separating herself from him.
- H. Perhaps there is some mother here who has done all that you can for your child, and there is nothing else you can do. The situation does not seem to be changing, and your only resolve is to let go and let God.
- I. If your child has gotten caught up in societal pressures, of gang violence, drug abuse, or promiscuity, be assured it is not a reflection of your parenting, it is a choice that they have made.
- J. Resolve, to turn your child over to God, and take note of what God is able to do.

II. We must know that there may be a period of separation which will allow God to work.

- A. It now it appears that her son is dead, there is no breath in his body, and he is limp in her arms. The natural instinct toward someone that you care about who is in trouble is to grab them, hug them, hold them, comfort them as best you can until help arrives.
- B. Elijah was a man of God, but to the woman he was the cause of her son’s condition, therefore, the last thing that she would naturally want to do, is to do what Elijah said.
- C. She had to give Elijah her son, even when she thought that Elijah was the cause. She had to give Elijah her son, even when she did not fully trust him or his God.
- D. She had to give Elijah her son, even though that was the only family that she had.
- E. In other words, she had to separate herself from what she loved so much – just to allow God to work.
- F. And some mother here today, you have been holding on too long. Yes, you prayed to God for him to deal with it. Yes, you prayed to God for him to handle it. Yes, you want the situation to turn around. And yes, you even turned it over to God, but now you have to do one more thing, you have to separate yourself from it or them, and let God work.
- G. And I don’t know about you, but there have been some things that I had to separate myself from what I thought I could not live without – just to let God work the situation out.

III. God will bring what appears to be dead back to life for his glory and for our story.

- A. The Bible says that after Elijah prayed and cried out to the Lord, that he then brought the son back to the woman and told her “your son lives”.
- B. My brothers and my sisters, that is good news for us this morning. Because, someone needs to know that “your son lives”, your child lives
- C. In other words, what appears to be dead, God worked out and brought it back to life. What appeared to be hopeless God worked it out and brought it back to life. What appeared to be lost, God found it. And what I am trying to

let someone know this morning, is that there is no situation that is too hard for God.

D. Can you imagine the feeling that is now present in this woman? The last time she saw her son he was breathless and appeared to be dead, but after God has done his work, the next time she sees her son he is breathing and alive.

E. And that answers the question that someone has deep in the recesses of their mind. You have been quietly wondering if God is able to turn it around, if God can handle it, if God can make a difference, if God really cares, and the answer is YES. No matter how dead your situation looks, the word is – your son lives.

F. And the woman replies to Elijah, now I know that you are a man of God.

Now I know that God is able. Now I know that God is true. Now I know that

God is real. Now I know that God is good. Now I know that God is in charge.

Now I know that God can do anything but fail. Now I know that your God is real

IV. Conclusion

A. Is there anyone here that has ever been in what looked like a dead situation only to discover that once you turned it over to God, you too had the testimony like the woman – NOW I UNDERSTAND?

B. If you look at the text carefully, it looks like a foreshadowing of the Gospel. Because, one Friday there was another son that was died. There was no breath in his body. And as He hung on the cross, He had to turn the situation over to God. Before he died he said “Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit”.

C. He had done what he was assigned to do, and now the rest was left up to God – He had to turn it over.

D. He had to separate himself from mankind and he died.

E. And when he died, the Bible says that a centurion soldier said “surely, this must be the Son of God.” In other words he said, NOW I UNDERSTAND.

F. Just like Elijah laid across the boy three times, Jesus stayed in the grave three days, and the Bible says that early on the third day morning (Sunday), God raised him from the dead with all power.

G. We must turn our situation over to God, we must know that there may be a period of separation, but we must also know that God is able to bring what appears to be dead back to life.

H. Elijah did it with the son – and the woman said “now I know. God did it with Jesus and the centurion soldier said “now I know”. Let God do it with you so you can say “now I know”.

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VITA

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In 1997, Ralph M. McCormick enrolled in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and in December 2000 he received a Masters of Divinity Degree. He has served as Youth Minister at Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, and at University Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. On March 9, 2003, Ralph M. McCormick began his tenure as Pastor of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, where he serves to this day.